



STAR WARS REBELS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW INSIDE!

STAR WARS

INSIDER

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"We'll meet again, friends."

—Boba Fett, *The Star Wars Holiday Special*, 1978

In terms of villainous threats, Boba Fett's sign-off to our rebel heroes during his animated debut was less than convincing. Yet, somehow, the character gained traction with *Star Wars*' burgeoning fanbase and a legend was slowly born.

This issue, we've assigned *Star Wars* author Jason Fry the task of finding out what makes Fett such a fan favorite. Is it the armor, the voice, the rocket pack and gadgets, or is there more to the shadowy bounty hunter? Fry is assisted by *Star Wars* fans across Twitter who have some pretty great ideas about why they love him! In fact, keep following @SW_Insider, because we'll be needing your help with future articles...

We're also looking forward—almost a whole year!—to *Star Wars Rebels*, the exciting new animated series that is being created as we speak! Not only is Athena Portillo—the line producer on the show—starting the first of many exclusive production updates, we also have executive producer Greg Weisman discussing his lifelong love of the saga and dropping tantalizing hints about the new show. It's the first of many exciting new features as *Star Wars* enters an amazing new era. Are you ready, friends?

May the Force be with you... Always.

Jonathan Wilkins, Editor

STAR WARS

JANUARY 2014

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

Frank Parisi and Erich Schoeneweiss at
Random House, Tracy Cannobbio and
Chris Argypoulos at Lucasfilm

TITAN

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DISTRIBUTION

US Newsstand: Total Publisher Services, Inc.
John Dziwinski, 630-851-7683
US Distribution: Source Interlink, Curtis
Circulation Company
UK Newsstand: Comag, 01895 444 055
USA/UK Direct Sales Market: Diamond
Comic Distributors

SUBSCRIPTIONS

US subscriptions: 1-800-999-9718,
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UK subscriptions: 0844 322 1280
email: samag@servicehelpline.co.uk

For more info on advertising contact
adinfo@titanemail.com

STAR WARS INSIDER JANUARY 2014
[USPS 003-027]
[ISSN 1041-5122]

Star Wars Insider is published eight times per year
January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August/
September, October/November/December by Titan
Magazines, a division of Titan Publishing Group Limited,
144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP. Contents © 2014
Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All Rights Reserved.
Titan Publishing Group 100% FSC

PUBLISHER'S U.S. AGENT

2019 Rosehill Lane, Aurora, IL, 60003. Periodicals
Postage Paid at Aurora, IL, and at additional
mailing offices.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to Star Wars Insider,
PO Box 18479, Anaheim, CA 92618-0479
U.S. subscriptions:
\$24.99 per year; Canada \$29.99
and U.K. \$37.99
Printed in the U.S. by Brown

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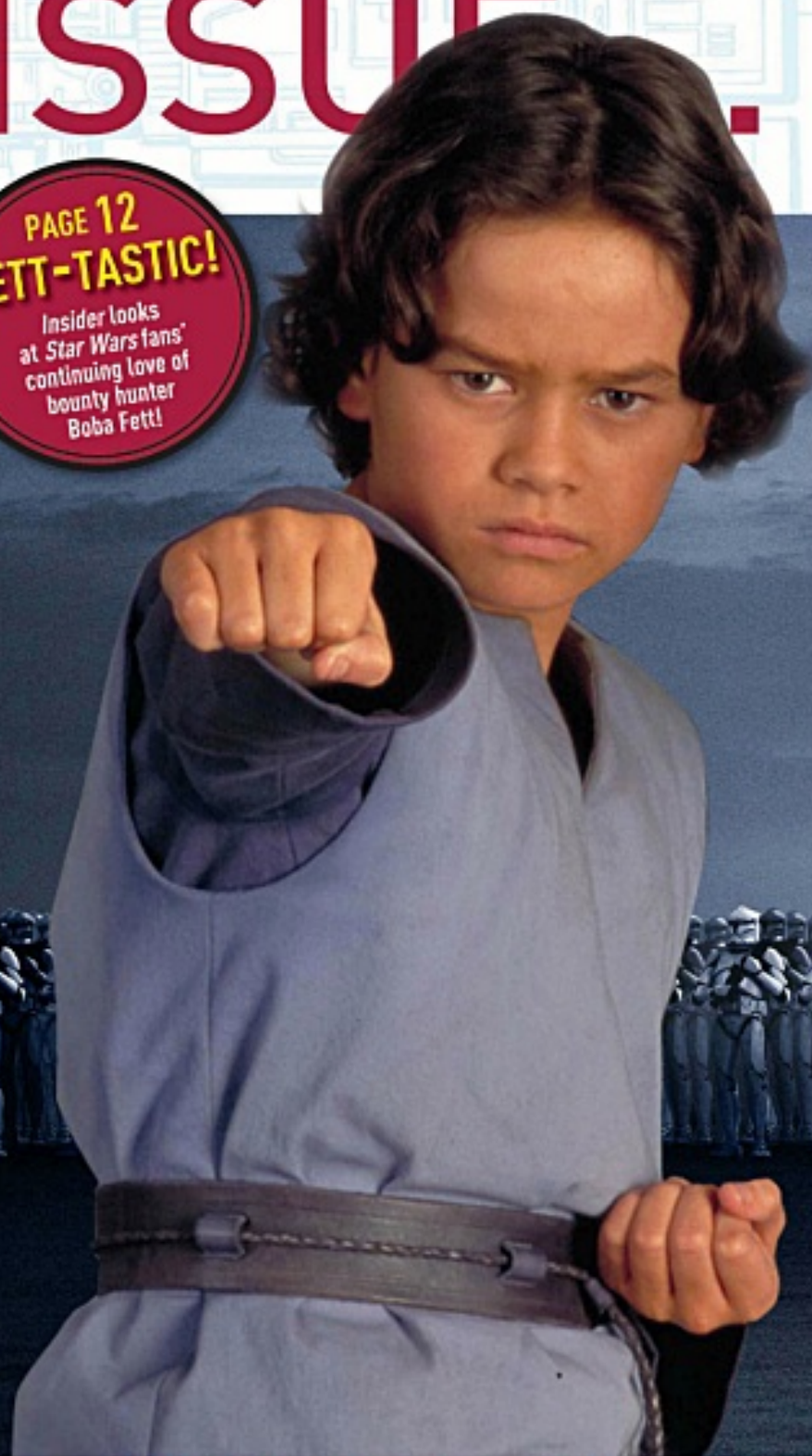
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at *Star Wars* fans'
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COVER STORY!

This issue of *Star Wars Insider* is available with an image-only cover exclusively for subscribers. There's also an exclusive cover image that is available only at selected comic stores!

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LAUNCH PAD

THE LATEST UPDATES FROM THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE

STARKILLER TOPS CHARTS

THE STAR WARS GOES FROM FIRST DRAFT TO BIG HIT!

Given its epic sweep, and strangely familiar yet different tone to the movie it became, there's little surprise that *The Star Wars* has proved to be a smash hit. The comic book, which visualizes George Lucas's original rough draft of the saga, flew to the top of the advanced orders chart, beating *Batman*, *X-Men*, and *The Walking Dead*.

Congratulations to writer J. W. Rinzler, artist Mike Mayhew, and all at Dark Horse Comics!



STAR WARS EPISODE VII TAKES SHAPE

WRITERS REVEALED!

Lawrence Kasdan and director J.J. Abrams have assumed screenwriting duties for *Star Wars: Episode VII*, taking over from Michael Arndt. Kasdan, who has been serving as a consultant on the film, is a veteran of several classic Lucasfilm productions, writing the screenplay for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and co-screenwriting *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*.

"I am very excited about the story we have in place, and thrilled to have Larry and J.J. working on the script," says Lucasfilm President Kathleen Kennedy. "There are very few people who fundamentally understand the way a *Star Wars* story works like Larry, and it is nothing short of incredible to have him even more deeply involved in its return to the big screen. J.J. of course is an incredible storyteller in his own right. Michael Arndt has done a terrific job bringing us to this point, and we have an amazing filmmaking and design team in place already prepping for production."



MEET THE TEAM

Location scouting, production design, casting, and costume design are already underway on Episode VII. A team of gifted artists are working to bring the latest installment of the *Star Wars* saga, including director of photography Dan Mindel (*Mission: Impossible III*, *Star Trek*, *Star Trek Into Darkness*), production designers Rick Carter (*Lincoln*, *Avatar*, *Forrest Gump*) and Darren Gilford (*Oblivion*, *TRON: Legacy*), costume designer Michael Kaplan (*Star Trek Into Darkness*, *Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol*, *Fight Club*), special effects supervisor Chris Corbould (*Skyfall*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Inception*), sound designer Ben Burtt (*Lincoln*, *Wall-E*, *Star Wars: Episodes I-VI*), re-recording mixer Gary Rydstrom (*Jurassic Park*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Toy Story*,

Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol), supervising sound editor Matthew Wood (*Star Trek Into Darkness*, *The Master*, *There Will Be Blood*) of Skywalker Sound, and visual effects supervisor Roger Guyett (*Star Trek Into Darkness*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, *Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith*) of Industrial Light & Magic. Kathleen Kennedy, J.J. Abrams, and Bryan Burk are producing, with Tommy Harper (*Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol*, *Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit*, *Star Trek Into Darkness*) and Jason McGatlin (*Tintin*, *War of the Worlds*) serving as executive producers. John Williams will provide the score.

Shooting is scheduled to begin Spring 2014 at Pinewood Studios for an expected 2015 release.

PLANNING ON WATCHING SOME STAR WARS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON? HERE ARE THREE COOL WAYS TO GET YOUR FORCE FIX!

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AGAINST: Even the toughest fan will be in tears by the end, just like the rancor keeper!



THE YODA CHRONICLES DVD

FOR: Two fantastic LEGO Star Wars movies:

The Phantom Clone and *Menace of the Sith* feature in the set.

AGAINST: Show it to a small child and they'll never want to stop watching...

STAR WARS REBELS

FRONTLINE UPDATE!

THE LATEST INFORMATION ON THE HOTLY ANTICIPATED NEW STAR WARS TV SHOW!



Hey, Star Wars fans! I'm Athena Portillo and I'm the line producer on *Star Wars Rebels*. I'll be bringing you updates on the show exclusively in *Star Wars Insider*.

"We're still in the early stages of production on the first season, but things are well underway. We've completed all our development, and have begun animating our very first script."

"The tone of the show is action/adventure, but with more elements of fun for the new generation of *Star Wars* fans and their parents! There is a main cast of characters who will be re-occurring throughout the season. However, you will see some familiar faces, too!"

"The series takes place between Episodes III and IV. By this time, Order 66 has been executed and the Empire's search for the last of the Jedi Knights is in full effect. The events seen in the show take place closer to *A New Hope* in the *Star Wars* timeline. However, if you stay tuned, you may be in for some surprises...."

CONTINUES OVERLEAF



STAR WARS REBELS

FRONTLINE UPDATE!

THE LATEST INFORMATION ON THE HOTLY ANTICIPATED NEW STAR WARS TV SHOW!

THE TEAM

"It has been great seeing the mind meld between our executive producers Dave Filoni, Simon Kinberg, and Greg Weisman (see page 34) during the writers' conferences. I know I just referenced *Star Trek* but it's true! Everyone on the team is so passionate about *Rebels*, and of course it helps that we are all huge fans of *Star Wars*!"

STAR WARS REBELS GETS IMPERIAL APPROVAL!

Hasbro has revealed the stormtrooper-based packaging for their upcoming line of highly detailed 3.75-inch action figures with multiple points of articulation! The first will launch in conjunction with the new show in Fall 2014.



STAR WARS 2013 THE YEAR IN REVIEW!

IT'S BEEN ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR THE SAGA....

JANUARY

01: Timothy Zahn's Han Solo heist novel *Scoundrels* is released to great acclaim as we dive back into the original trilogy era of *Star Wars*.

25: *Star Trek* and *Mission: Impossible* supreme J.J. Abrams is announced as the director for *Star Wars: Episode VII*. His love and knowledge of the galaxy far, far away is immediately evident.

29: *Fate of the Jedi: Apocalypse* is released in paperback, bringing the epic series to its conclusion.

FEBRUARY

02: *The Clone Wars* cast takes part in an exclusive Google Plus Hangout, allowing the fans to chat with the stars of the show directly.



06: Legendary creature creator and make-up artist Stuart Freeborn (above) dies aged 98. His creations live on.

26: *The Last Jedi* by Michael Reaves and Maya Kaathryn Bohnhoff is released, continuing the *Coruscant Nights* series as we follow Jax Pavan and IS on their adventures.

MARCH



02: *Star Wars: The Clone Wars'* season finale "The Wrong Jedi" airs, seemingly bringing Ahsoka Tano's story to a heartbreaking end, as she opts to leave the Jedi Order for good. There's more to come... But not as we might have first thought because...

11: The end of *The Clone Wars* series is announced, bringing to a close a five-year run that thrilled *Star Wars* fans across the globe.

20: *Star Wars: Legacy #1: Prisoner of the Floating World* is released, returning us to the Legacy era, but this time following a descendant of the Solo family: Han and Leia's great-great granddaughter, Ania.

APRIL

03: A sad day as LucasArts is closed, cancelling all projects including the hotly anticipated *Star Wars: 1313*.

15: Richard LeParmentier, much loved as Admiral Motti in *A New Hope*, dies aged 66, as fandom loses a stalwart friend.

23: *Vader's Little Princess*, the sequel to *Darth Vader and Son* by Jeffrey Brown is released, bringing some levity to the galaxy.

MAY

07: *Dawn of the Jedi: Into the Void* arrives in hardback, throwing us back in time 25,000 years to the very origins of the Jedi—then known as the Je'daii Order—and their battle against a fanatical cult.



14: Abrams publishes *Star Wars: Storyboards—The Prequel Trilogy*, the most complete set of drawings by great artists, such as Iain McCaig, Ed Natividad, Benton Jew, Rodolfo Damaggio, and Derek Thompson.

20: *Star Wars Rebels* is announced on StarWars.com, promising a rip-roaring adventure set in the uncharted years between *Revenge of the Sith* and *A New Hope*.

25: The 30th anniversary of *Star Wars: Episode VI Return of the Jedi* arrives, accompanied by screenings worldwide and Kyle Newman's fantastic *Return of the Jedi* documentary.

JUNE

03: Jason Fry's book *the Star Wars: The Clone Wars Episode Guide* is released, covering the 2008 movie and all five seasons of the show.

09: After four weekends, *Star Wars Weekends* concludes at Walt Disney Studios, ending the 14th running of the event, which first took place back in 1997.

24: George Lucas marries his long-time love, Mellody Hobson, in a ceremony at Skywalker Ranch and a reception in Chicago. Van Morrison performs at the ranch and Prince performs at the reception, and guests include Mark Hamill, Hayden Christensen, and Warwick Davis.

JULY

02: William Shakespeare's *Star Wars* arrives, bringing iambic pentameter to the *Star Wars* galaxy (finally!) and becomes a bestseller.



09: Troy Denning's *Crucible* is released, telling the most recent tale of Han, Luke, and Leia in the chronology.

26-28: The celebration returns to Europe after a six-year hiatus as Celebration Europe arrives in Essen, bringing a plethora of guests including Kathleen Kennedy (who revealed John Williams will be scoring the new *Star Wars* sequels). 2015's Celebration Anaheim is announced at the closing ceremony. Here we go again!

AUGUST

23: Legendary cinematographer Gilbert Taylor, who worked on the first *Star Wars* movie, dies aged 99.

27: John Jackson Miller's *Star Wars: Kenobi* is released to great acclaim. Telling the story of how Obi-Wan became known as "crazy old Ben," the story is an instant hit.

SEPTEMBER

04: J. W. Rinzler and Mike Mayhew bring us *The Star Wars #1*, based on the 1974 rough draft screenplay by George Lucas.

19: Feathers fly again as *Angry Birds Star Wars II* is released.

24: Martha Wells' first entry in the *Empire and Rebellion* series is released. *Razor's Edge* focuses primarily on Princess Leia following the events of *A New Hope*!

OCTOBER

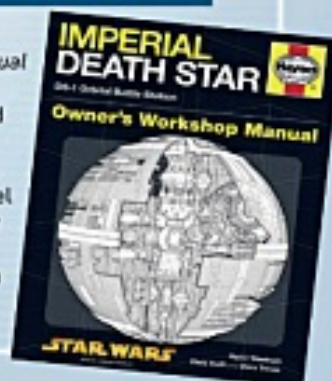
01: J. W. Rinzler's indispensable *The Making of Return of the Jedi* completes the trilogy of "making of" books with the usual mix of rare images and meticulously researched information. The book was soon joined by enhanced eBook versions of *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi* (on October 22).

08: *Star Wars Art: Concept* is released, continuing the widely acclaimed series of hardback art books.

15: *Star Wars: The Clone Wars: The Complete Season Five* is released. A complete set of seasons pulling together the five seasons of the acclaimed and award-winning series into one box is also released.

NOVEMBER

05: *The Death Star Owner's Workshop Manual* is published. Written by Ryder Windham and illustrated by Chris Trevas and Chris Reiff, showing the many rebel cells across the galaxy how to first build, and then blow up their own Death Star.





Mark and Elliot share the love with R4CE2!



The boys in action—live on stage!

THE ENTERTAINERS!

MC MARK DANIEL AND DJ ELLIOT KEPT THE CROWDS HAPPY AT THE MAIN CELEBRATION STAGE. HERE THEY SHARE THEIR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SHOW...

Mark: Elliot and I started at Celebration V in Orlando—

Elliot: Celebration V.

M: Celebration V is where we started working together. Working with Elliot in Germany was awesome. One of the cool things was actually working with Warwick Davis and Oliver Moore, his assistant—they were really cool and we were part of that team.

E: Having the opportunity to provide the voice for—

M: What was his name?

E: —R4CE2, brought to us by the R2-builders group from Germany, who did a fantastic job.

M: I think a big highlight was seeing the 30th anniversary showing of *Return of the Jedi* in Grugapark. It was cool; we all shared something when we were walking through that huge, beautiful park and sitting on the grass and seeing the opening credits with all the energy and the people cheering! I'm sorry you didn't get to experience that, Elliot.

E: I did get to experience the line—apparently you found a sneaky way into the park.

M: Human beings like to wait in lines. Us Americans were like, "Heck no!"

E: I think one of my favorite experiences was getting to be part of a lot of the 501st events. I did the first meet and greet, but the highlight was definitely the big 501st

gala that evening. I sat at a table and had all the "Fetts" surrounding me.

M: Do you know who wasn't there? Me!

E: Yeah, you weren't there, but I had Daniel Logan on my left, Jeremy Bulloch sitting across from me, and Temuera Morrison across from me in the other direction! On my right were Peter Mayhew and his wife, Steve Sansweet was sitting behind me—it was all very bizarre!

M: I think the fans are the best thing. They really embraced us and really made us feel comfortable, so it was a lot of fun to play with them. One fun thing was your birthday on that Sunday—we got you an awesome leftover cake and I kissed you! I kissed Elliot on the cheek and some of the fans took pictures and put it up on Twitter right away! Everyone was so friendly and just wanted to have a good time. The fans are what really make Celebration.

M: The panels were awesome! Watching Ian McDiarmid get comfortable at his second Celebration was just awesome to see. He was doing the Emperor's voice in German!

E: The interesting thing was watching Warwick interview Mark and Carrie knowing that they've known him since he was eleven. I just thought that was really cool, especially when Carrie and Warwick re-created the scene from *Return of the Jedi*.

M: You could tell that in a lot of the photos they took, she would always be carrying him—you know, like how Michael Jackson used to carry Webster—you could tell she almost went into mother-mode with him!

M: I guess my final highlight was getting to meet Kathleen Kennedy. Basically every movie she ever made touched or changed my life. The excitement she brought to the movies and her being the logical person to take over making *Star Wars*—it was awesome. The energy of the room was just amazing.

E: I wish I was still there right now!

Follow the boys on
Twitter and visit their websites at

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See more on Celebration Europe in our *Bantha Tracks* special, starting page 74!

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A CERTAIN POINT OF VIEW



THE MAN IN THE DENTED MASK

ONE OF THE MOST ENDURING ICONS OF THE *STAR WARS* SAGA, BOBA FETT REMAINS A FAN FAVORITE CHARACTER 30 YEARS AFTER HE PLUNGED INTO THE SARLAAC PIT. JASON FRY INVESTIGATES HIS APPEAL!

If you're a *Star Wars* fan of a certain age, you would have been familiar with Boba Fett before you had any idea who he was.

If you were truly lucky, you were at a county fair in San Anselmo, California, and witnessed Fett march in a parade alongside Darth Vader in September 1978—a test run for his prototype costume. If you weren't there, you probably saw him a few weeks later in *The Star Wars Holiday Special*, introduced in a cartoon that was the only watchable part of that debacle. And if you somehow missed that, you undoubtedly sent proof-of-purchases to Kenner the next spring, then waited by the mailbox for your Fett action figure (though he arrived without the spring-loaded rocket pack originally promised).

Kenner told us Fett would play "a major role" in the next *Star Wars* movie, *The Empire Strikes Back*, which strictly speaking wasn't true: Fett did business with Darth Vader, took a shot at Luke Skywalker and abducted Han Solo, but

he had a grand total of four lines and was never referred to by name. Nor was he a major presence in *Return of the Jedi*. Fett's name was finally heard on-screen, but his only line was "What the...!", followed by a dismayed yell after a semi-blind Han accidentally struck his jetpack, sending him hurtling into the Sarlacc pit.

It didn't matter: From these brief minutes of screen time, a *Star Wars* icon had been born. More than three decades later, Fett remains a mainstay of videogames, comics and novels in the Expanded Universe. What accounts for the enduring popularity of this briefly seen, rarely heard bounty hunter? Why is Fett as recognizable as the likes of Darth Vader, Chewbacca and R2-D2, despite far, far less screen time?

The answer—or at least your author's answer—is a combination of visual flair, an evocative character and a certain mystery, one that's lingered despite the growing body of lore about the hunter in the gargoyle helmet.





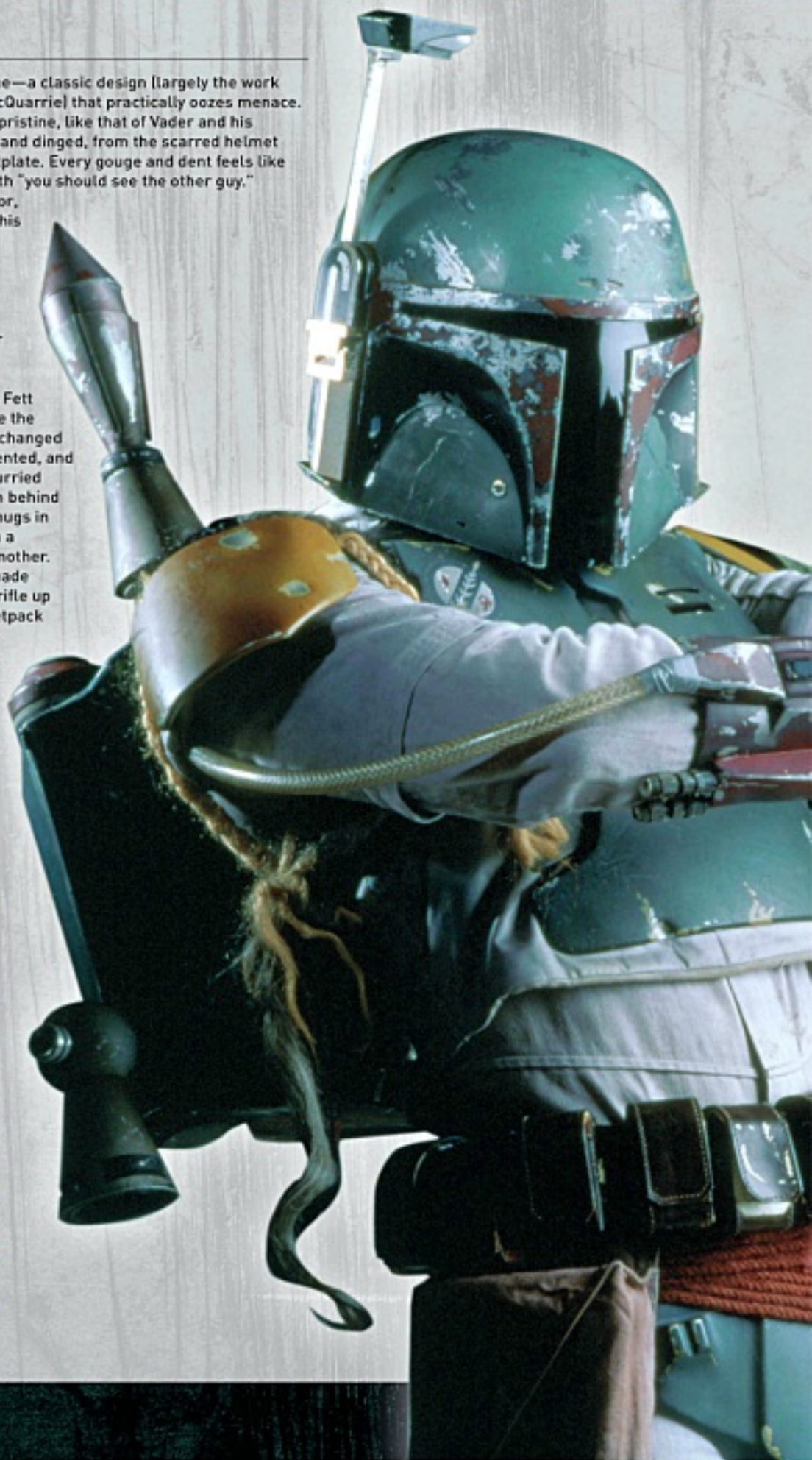
Art by
Chris Trevas

SINISTER PURPOSE

First of all, there's that costume—a classic design (largely the work of Joe Johnston and Ralph McQuarrie) that practically oozes menace. Fett's armor isn't glossy and pristine, like that of Vader and his stormtroopers—it's battered and dinged, from the scarred helmet and tattered cloak to the pitted breastplate. Every gouge and dent feels like it has a tale to tell, one that begins with "you should see the other guy." Mysterious symbols adorn Fett's armor, a jetpack and missile are strapped to his back, scalpels hang over one shoulder, and his arms and legs bristle with weapons and tools of unknown but undoubtedly sinister purpose.

Jeremy Bulloch, who played Fett in *Empire* and *Jedi*, gave the character an air of implacable calm, with the slightest turn of the head conveying danger. There was the deliberate way Fett prepared his starship *Slave I* to pursue the *Millennium Falcon*, the brief glance exchanged with Lando Calrissian as Han is tormented, and his signature moment—his cool, unhurried entrance into Cloud City's dining room behind Vader. In *Jedi*, Fett stood among the thugs in Jabba's throne room, offering Boushh a professional nod, one gunslinger to another. This stillness and sense of purpose made Fett's bursts of action—snapping his rifle up to aim at Chewbacca, or igniting his jetpack to fly from Jabba's sail barge—all the more striking.

But the Fett of *Empire* and *Jedi* wasn't just about looks—he sounded deadly, too. When he joined Vader on Cloud City, we heard his spurs clinking. And his voice, as originally supplied by Jason Wingreen, sounded raw and scraped from disuse. Fett, we sensed, was a being of the fewest possible words, surrendering each syllable reluctantly.



A MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

The mishmash of worn gear, the spurs and the conspicuous weaponry are familiar trappings of an archetype often seen in Westerns: The Mysterious Stranger. Fett belongs to a long lineage of violence-haunted drifters who arrive in peaceful towns, their pasts cloudy and their purpose unknown. Think John Wayne in *The Searchers*, Alan Ladd as Shane, or Clint Eastwood in any number of movies. We don't know who these men are, but we register their travel-worn clothes and their familiarity with a gun, and we know their grim stares promise a reckoning is at hand. But at least these men have faces—in *Empire*, Fett is invisible and unknowable, hidden behind his T-shaped visor.

It's a powerful archetype—and it's this essential mystery that has kept Fett an icon, even as we've learned more than we ever could have dreamed (and perhaps wanted to know) about the character's past.

Fett vanished into the toothed maw of the Sarlacc in *Return of the Jedi*, a rather casual demise for

so good a character—and a death the nascent Expanded Universe would soon undo. Marvel Comics wasted no time resurrecting Fett—the Sarlacc spat him out in its very first comic book to hit newsstands after Episode VI, though his escape was brief. In 1991, Dark Horse also brought Fett back in *Dark Empire*, with Han and Leia finding their old nemesis very much alive and determined to collect the price on their heads. Fett even got more screen time, albeit retroactively: The special edition of *A New Hope* digitally added him to the thugs threatening Han in Mos Eisley, while a pickup shot for the revised *Return of the Jedi* saw him stroke a dancer under her chin.



BOBA FETT IS INVISIBLE AND UNKNOWABLE, HIDDEN BEHIND HIS T-SHAPED VISOR.

FETT'S GREATEST HITS...

Seven tales that rank among Boba Fett's most evocative adventures...

"The Last One Standing"—In the 1996 anthology *Tales of the Bounty Hunters*, Daniel Keys Moran portrays Fett as a brutal, stunted man with a chilly, inflexible sense of morality, giving the character complexity without surrendering his mystery. The story ends with a no-longer-young Fett and Han Solo locked in combat, the outcome yet to be determined. Many of the facts in Moran's tale have been overwritten by the prequels, but his elegiac ending remains one of the Expanded Universe's best moments.

"Bounty"—Perhaps the most stylish episode of *The Clone Wars*, this 2012 tale sees Fett leading a crew of hunters—including Dengar, Asajj Ventress and the cooler-than-cool C-21 Highsinger—through the caverns of Quarzite aboard a speeding hover-train. The young hunter is capable enough that we see what he'll become, but still inexperienced enough to need more lessons.

"Twin Engines of Destruction"—Collected in the Dark Horse trade paperback *Bounty Hunters*, this 1997 Andy Mangels tale has art by John Nadeau and Jordi Ensign. Mangels' Fett does a lot while saying little, making every word count. And while Jodo Kast may wear Fett's armor, he's no match for his rival's ruthlessness.

Enemy of the Empire—This 1999 Dark Horse series, written by John Wagner, with art by Ian Gibson, John Nadeau and Jim Amash, is the stuff of fanboy dreams, sending Fett up against Darth Vader himself on a forlorn world. It works: Wagner's Fett is pitiless and resourceful, and the storyline is by turns darkly funny and quietly unsettling.

Death, Lies and Treachery—A 1998 collection from Dark Horse, this trade paperback combines three John Wagner tales illustrated by Cam Kennedy. Fett outwits space pirates, Hutts and other ne'er-do-wells, and even though the character is silent, the artwork conveys Fett as a shrewd professional at the top of his game.

"Boba Fett: Agent of Doom"—This 2000 Dark Horse comic by John Ostrander, with Cam Kennedy art, shows Fett as an agent of good... or at least justice. He pursues the crew of an Imperial death ship for a pittance, determined to remind the galaxy what the name Boba Fett means. (Look for it in the 2007 trade paperback *Boba Fett: Man With a Mission*.)

The Mandalorian Armor—The first book of K.W. Jeter's 1998 trilogy comes gloriously to life when Fett and a gang of hunters, including the unforgettable D'harhan, arrive on the planet Circumlore for a confrontation with the Shell Hutts. Jeter ratchets the tension sky-high before releasing it in a bravura showdown.

Left, from opposite page: Boba Fett makes his debut in the *Star Wars Holiday Special*; Fett spots another target; ready to blast into action during the battle at the Great Pit of Carkoon.



BUT WHO IS HE?

Meanwhile, with the Expanded Universe growing to include more and more tales, Fett had gained a back-story. He was born Jaster Mereel, became a Journeyman Protector on the planet Concord Dawn, then was forced into exile and acquired a suit of Mandalorian battle armor and a new identity, becoming the galaxy's most feared bounty hunter. But his face remained a mystery. A 1994 trading card showed a helmetless Fett with white hair, blank white eyes and pointed ears. That was classified as an artist's what-if, but a 1997 comic revealed a human Fett hiding his face behind bandages, his back puckered with Sarlacc scars.

**A 1994 TRADING CARD
SHOWED A
HELMETLESS FETT.**





From left, opposite page: The true face of Fett? Art by Jan Nadeau and Jord Ensign. From *Twin Engines of Destruction* by Andy Mangels; Dan Beretan's speculative take on Fett for a Topps trading card; Fett with his prize: Han Solo.

Tweets on Fett

We asked *Star Wars* fans on Twitter why they love Boba Fett. Here are some of the best tweets!

It was the same as Maul. They had very few lines and decided that action was louder than words.
@Darelan_Frost

Boba Fett is a classic case of "less is more." Few lines, large screen presence, premature demise.
@Brad_Monastiere

Ruthless. Unscrupulous. Unflinching. Unstoppable. "You can run but you'll only die tired."
@bonejangles13

Who's the cat that won't cop out, When there's danger all about? (Fett) Right on!
@ngematic

The fact I chose him as my 1st costume build for the 501st and I'm a woman! Enough said!
@crazy4boba Fett

His backpack's got jets!
@heatmerc

Thanks for your tweets! Don't forget to follow
@star_insider

A NEW HISTORY

Then, in 2002, we had to unlearn everything we had learned. *Attack of the Clones* introduced us to a bounty hunter in familiar though differently colored Mandalorian armor. This was Jango Fett, the template for the Kaminoans' clone army. As part of Jango's compensation, the Kaminoans gave him an unaltered clone of himself—his "son" Boba. We had met a helmetless Boba Fett at last, and he was just a boy, one destined to inherit his father's starship, career and ruthless reputation. Our last sight of Boba was a haunting, instantly iconic image: an orphan in the wreckage of the Geonosis arena, pressing his father's helmet to his forehead.

With Fett's new backstory in place, young-adult novels told of his first attempts at the bounty-hunting trade, while *The Clone Wars* TV show revealed his grim apprenticeship with the assassin Aurra Sing. Storytellers invented new run-ins between Fett and Solo and new missions undertaken for Vader and Jabba the Hutt. We saw Fett become the leader of the Mandalorians, train Jedi, fight the Yuuzhan Vong, and attempt a halting reconciliation with a daughter and granddaughter he and we barely knew. Whatever era they worked in, authors found Fett an irresistible character, and were determined to try their hand at penning new adventures for him. (I'm no exception—*The Essential Guide to Warfare* recounts a tense meeting between Fett and the arachnid information broker Balancesheet.)

And so 35 years after his introduction, Fett has gone from forbidding stranger to familiar face. We're used to seeing him without his helmet and in and out of his armor. Authors have told dozens of his adventures, giving us silent Fetts and chatty

ones (silent works better). We know about his youthful doubts and his elderly aches and pains.

Yet for all this, Fett retains his fundamental air of mystery. His tangled back-stories and overwritten histories should be frustrating, but somehow they make him an even more satisfying character. We've seen other Mandalorian hunters mistaken for him, and read about brave and/or foolish people who impersonated him, and in the back of our minds we wonder what we really know. Was he born in a vat on Kamino, or amid the fields of Concord Dawn? Did he begin his bounty-hunting career as a stormtrooper who'd killed his commanding officer, an exiled Journeyman Protector, a Mandalorian supercommando, or a boy seeking to avenge a fallen father?

After seeing the prequels, we may think we know the answers—but then an earlier generation of fans had different answers, and an even earlier one had nothing but blanks to be filled in by their imaginations. The Mysterious Stranger is an archetype as old and rich as storytelling itself, and the question it asks—Who Was That Masked Man?—is more powerful than any answer we're given.

Which brings us back to 1997, and that comic with Fett in bandages. Written by Andy Mangels, it shows Fett doing away with Jodo Kast, an impersonator in Mandalorian armor. When fellow bounty hunter Dengar suggests Fett rarely shows his face because of his Sarlacc scars, Fett turns his helmet in Dengar's direction.

"This is my face," he growls.

That was before we'd heard of Jango Fett, or dared to imagine some connection with the mysterious clones of *Star Wars* prequels yet unseen. Yet despite all the times we've seen Fett's face since then, I think Mangels got it right. 🍌

MY STAR WARS

A PROLIFIC AUTHOR, AARON ALLSTON'S 13 *STAR WARS* NOVELS INCLUDE THREE BOOKS IN BOTH THE FATE OF THE JEDI AND LEGACY OF THE FORCE SERIES. HERE, HE SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ON WHAT THE *STAR WARS* SAGA MEANS TO HIM. INTERVIEW: MARK NEWBOLD

When did you first

become aware of *Star Wars*?

That would have been in 1977. I was 16 years old living in Denton, Texas and there were ads for a movie that sounded really good to me. It looked like the old Republic serials, and it had Peter Cushing, so I had to go.



What was your reaction to seeing *Star Wars* for the first time?

Well the initial reaction was kind of embarrassing because the first scene with the Star Destroyer going overhead was amazing, and the first thought that occurred to me was, *Wow, now they can really do Flash Gordon.* Of course, three years later they really did do *Flash Gordon* and I really was embarrassed!

Can you reveal something about yourself that will surprise *Star Wars* fans?

I somehow doubt it! I grew up with a sensibility of 1930s and 1940s fiction and serials that fed into the same things as George Lucas got into for *Star Wars*. There's a commonality of experience there that makes me feel really, really akin to these movies. But that would not surprise anybody, just a question of my personal antiquity, you know.

Where did you sign your first *Star Wars* autograph?

I think that was at a GenCon in 1998.

Where is the strangest place you've been recognized?

Various restaurants and once in a cab, but I don't go to that many strange places!



Do you have a favorite *Star Wars* toy?

I believe it was the Lewis Galoob X-wing from several years back. It was a very nicely detailed and pretty model.





Which is your
favorite *Star Wars* film
and why?

You'll find the same answer from most of the writers in the Expanded Universe: *The Empire Strikes Back*. It's the movie with the most character development, it's the movie with the most significant advancement in the story arc of the original trilogy, and of course Leigh Brackett, who was a famous science fiction writer of bygone ages, contributed to it!



THE CONVERSATION

LAST ISSUE, *INSIDER* PRESENTED THE FIRST PART OF THE STORY CONFERENCE FOR THE NOVEL *SPLINTER OF THE MIND'S EYE* THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN *STAR WARS* CREATOR GEORGE LUCAS, AUTHOR ALAN DEAN FOSTER, AND LUCASFILM VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING AND MERCHANDISING CHARLES LIPPINCOTT. NOW, THE THREE MEET FOR THE SECOND PART OF THEIR MEETING. WORDS: J. W. RINZLER

After a break of one week, Lucas, Foster, and Lippincott reconvened on October 20, 1976, for part II of their brainstorming session. In the interim, it would seem that Foster had written up a rough outline based on their first session, so the three of them are riffing off of that as they strive to come up now with the basic story beats.

GL: It seems a lot like the first one. Because in the first one we met the Wookiees in the cantina and we had that cantina fight. I was wondering if we could just turn that around a little bit and do something different, which is, have Leia take [Luke] to the Wookiees or something like that, where the Wookiees show up in a different way and maybe a little bit later. I like the thing with the jail and everything, and having to go and get the Wookiees out.

ADF: Well, you know, I'm always reminded of the scene where they are trying to break Cary Grant out of jail in *Gunga Din* and they are using the elephant and the elephant winds up pushing the whole jail over.

GL: The other thing you've got to remember which is a little tricky, is that the Wookiees can't talk.

ADF: Right, I hadn't forgotten. But they cannot talk English, right?

GL: But they can talk Wookiee talk, yeah.

ADF: That might be kind of fun, too.

GL: I've made some notes on things and I was interested, just stylistically, in

getting into a very... Once we reach a point of fusion, which ought to happen somewhere in the first third, everything comes together. It's like in *Star Wars* now, once they get dragged into the Death Star, there is a fusion point and the rest of the film is just simply running around. They are constantly getting chased. It's Flash

**"WE CAN CONSTANTLY
THROW [LUKE AND LEIA]
FROM ONE CAULDRON
INTO ANOTHER."
—GEORGE LUCAS.**

Gordon from that point on. And I'd like to do that stylistically in this one—to the point where it's even more extreme than what I did in the first one. We can just constantly throw them from one cauldron into another...

ADF: As soon as Luke touches the bit of crystal, he knows Vader is coming. Then it's a race between them and Vader to get to the crystal. And off they go through jungles and mysterious alien civilizations, and you can have the second race of aliens walking around and throw in all of the wonderful jungle effects or bog effects—

GL: It's really creating a tension, reaching a point where, right from the very beginning, they're in trouble.

ADF: Yeah.

GL: And building their problem, so they just get into more and more and more trouble until the end. We have the search aspect of it where they are constantly searching, which is a motivating force, but the whole thing I would like to see is that they are chased the whole way. Not only are they chased, but they are constantly getting into trouble, falling into bottomless pits...

ADF: Alice in Wonderland.

GL: I like the idea, which is interesting and also very classic, of Luke becoming a leader of the tribe kind of thing, your basic hostile tribe. They get captured or whatever, and he has to do hand-to-hand combat with the chief and he wins [something that Annikin Starkiller does in the rough draft, vs. a Wookiee—JWR]. They all...

ADF: ... retreat, heal, and make up.

GL: Yeah. Flash Gordon did it with the cave people or whatever they were...

ADF: Okay, but to what end? So they can help him against Vader?

GL: Yes.

ADF: Okay.

GL: He has to use the tribe. It becomes his army. That was one of the things in the rough draft [from 1974]. He [Annikin] did that. They got captured and he... I went through the whole thing...

EXCLUSIVE



They get captured by the Wookiees and he does a razzle-dazzle on them and fights the head Wookiee.

WHAT ABOUT SOLO?

ADF: Part of the problem with the Han Solo character is I don't think you can just bring him in in the end.

GL: No, you can't. He has to be in the very beginning. He has to be there.

ADF: Either he's a central character or he's not in it. Because he is that kind of a character and that is a problem, too. You can't make him just a peripheral character. But I don't think you need him anyway; you have Luke and the princess and Halla and the two Wookiees all running around together. You've got five people all running around together. A sixth person is going to become a mob scene.

GL: Yeah, well that's the problem in the first one. We'll let Han be in the second sequel novel. That's better. Where he's the central character and the others are either not there or are very peripheral.

MORPHING MONSTERS

ADF: It might be interesting if the princess suggests that they go hide in there and then they fall down in a hole. It gives Luke an excuse to yell at the princess. Or would you rather have the princess yell—

GL: Well, we did that before in the first one, that constant yelling back and forth at each other. We've got to have a slightly or much more sophisticated interplay between them. It's got to be a much more of a ...

ADF: Carole Lombard and John Barrymore instead of Jean Harlow and Wallace Beery.

GL: Luke and the princess should have one short little adventure before they get captured. I don't know quite what that should be. I don't want it to be something like a landslide or anything.

ADF: I'll think of something.

GL: Some kind of a problem. Something that has got a lot of energy to it. And of course we just had them fight a monster and we can't really have them fight another one.

ADF: We have to be careful or this is going to be a monster a minute.



"IT'S A FIGHT BETWEEN TWO EXTRASENSORY GIANTS!"—GEORGE LUCAS

GL: Yeah.

GL: You could have ... the original one. The light one that was down there [in the second draft of *Star Wars*—a kind of Id monster from *Forbidden Planet*].

GL: The clear monster. [Editor's note: This becomes the "lake spirit" of Mimban in the novel.]

GL: Right. It could be done. It would be much easier to control in a cave.

GL: Well, it was all more or less underground originally.

ADF: Well, I don't know, that's up to you. Tell me what your monster's like.

GL: It could be like a poltergeist.

ADF: It could be very interesting with Luke and his lightsaber fighting a light type of creature. You know, the sword contacts the creature and there's a flare of light here and flare of light there. Luke fighting the Id monster [from *Forbidden Planet*] if I got this pictured right.

GL: Well, the idea was that it was much more like a translucent thing, like a big jellyfish.

ADF: Right...

GL: I'd like Luke to pause near some weird plant or something and he jumps into a pod and they are going across this black lake—and then in the middle of the lake something keeps bumping the boat, and it's all that weird *Jaws* stuff. You don't know what's going to come out of the water at you. Something like that you can do in a tank. If you can do it at night, you're free to deal with it however you want. You could have the monster walk across the water. It could be so ethereal, something that's not really there, but...

ADF: Swamp gas.

GL: Your basic will-o'-the-wisp monster and he has to battle it on the middle of this black lake. It can either be a giant amoeba kind of thing, which is the dynoga [sic]. The more ethereal beast from the Id, which is something that doesn't really exist... that's just something superimposed.

THE OL' TIME-LOCK

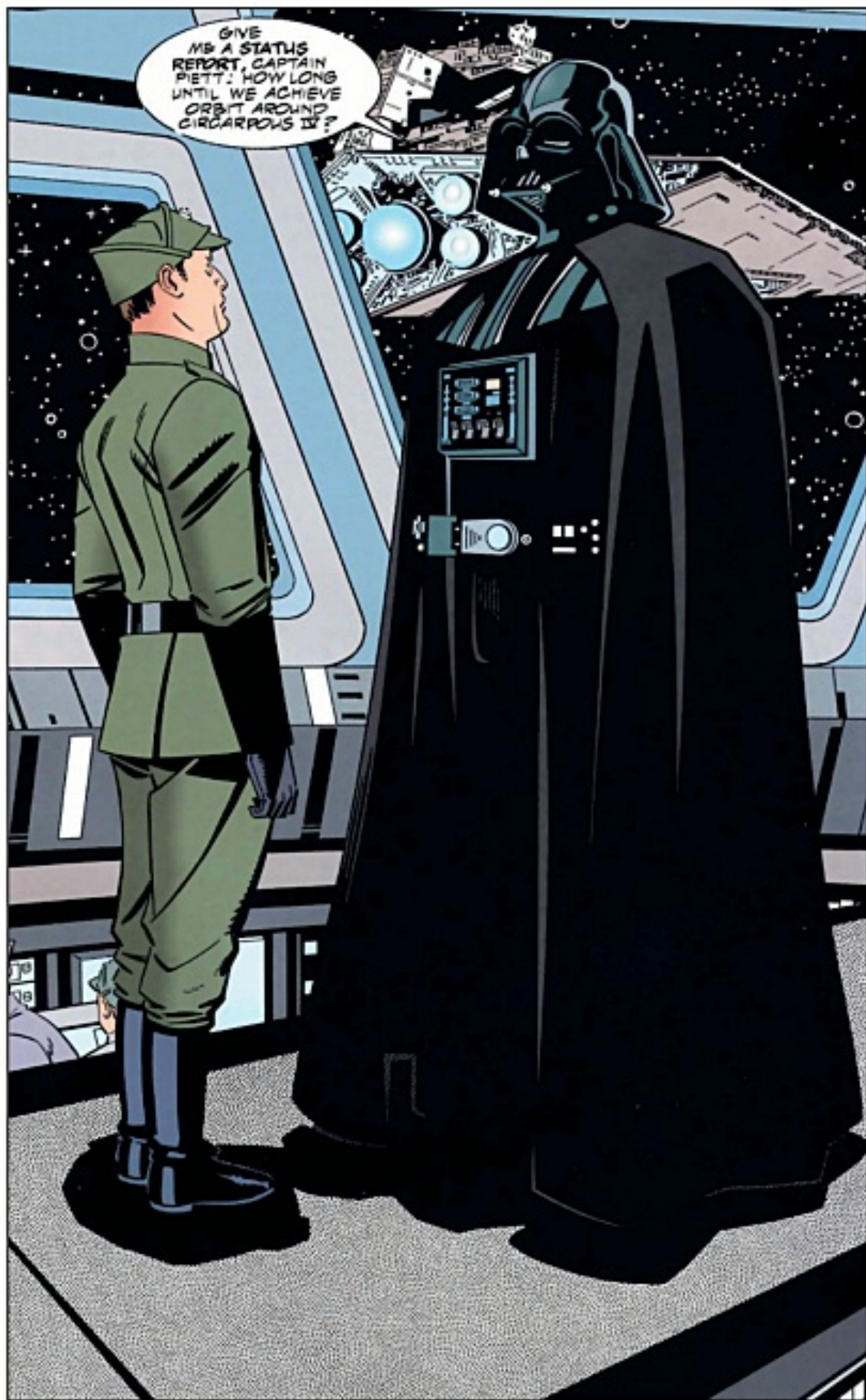
GL: One thing that we should do, though, is in the beginning, in the cantina, Halla should say where the crystal is. I think we should say it's at the great temple of Gaga Zoomi or something, so we know that they are going to a definite destination. That's the place they've got to get to. I think it's fairly important to establish that.

ADF: That's where the final big fight scene is.

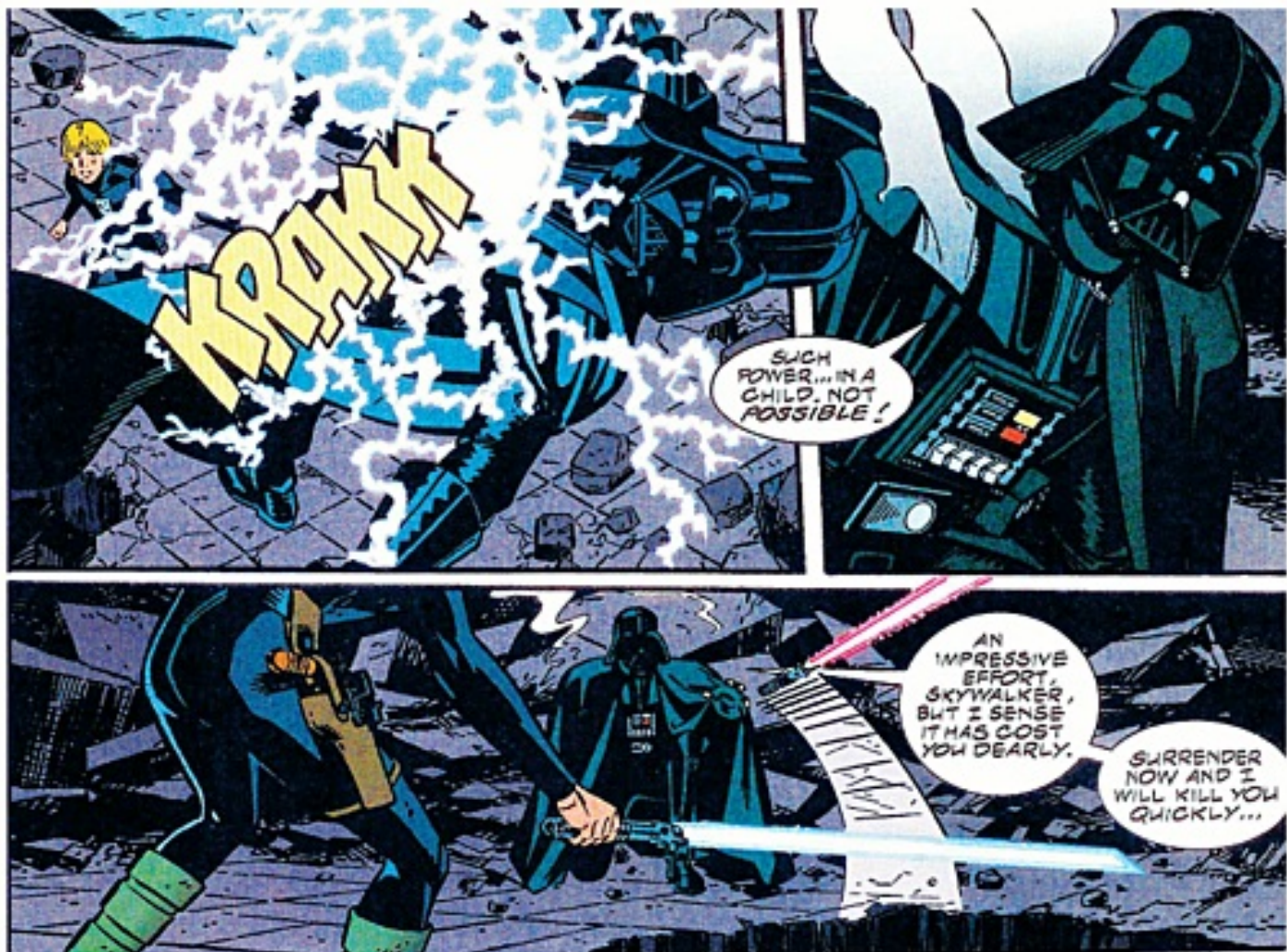
GL: Yeah. It's a time lock. Essentially, you're saying the movie is going to be over when they reach this place. It's just a matter of getting there. Obviously, when you get there there's gonna be a big battle. It's that simple. I like the idea of the battle, which I was going to do in the first movie [Luke duels Vader on the surface of the Death Star in one script—JWR]. But when we got into the Death Star, it wouldn't have really worked out very well.

The good thing about being in a temple is that you have a lot of junk around. So it's not only a sword fight, but a fight between two extrasensory giants, where Vader can pick things up and throw them across the room.

We also wanted to have a scene where Vader goes and bows before



Opposite page pages: Luke and Vader duel on the cover for issue #4 of Dark Horse Comics' *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* adaptation. Left: Vader cuts an imposing figure in the Dark Horse adaptation, but George Lucas originally had other plans for his most iconic character.



the Force and the Force picks him up and tells him that he better go out and get that crystal... But it's not the Force personified; it's on the verge of personification. Maybe it's a shadow or something.

ADF: The ultimate...

GL: It's the ultimate evil. It's the devil.

BUILDING UP VADER

GL: You mean kill the Wookiees?

CL: Have Vader kill them; they run into Vader first.

GL: Possible.

CL: You could really build this whole thing on the threat of Vader.

GL: Poor Wookiees. I haven't killed anybody in this stuff yet. Oh, I guess I killed Ben.

**"I HAVEN'T KILLED ANYBODY IN THIS STUFF YET. OH, I GUESS I KILLED BEN."
—GEORGE LUCAS**

ADF: Yeah.

GL: I forgot about that.

CL: Vader killed two people in the first movie. He choked that one guy to death. But the point is have him kill somebody sympathetic again, to help to build him up as a villain.

ADF: Well, we're both thinking the same thing; I don't want to kill the Wookiees. It works already.

GL: A real problem that we have in the first one is creating a threat out of Vader.

I mean he never does anything to anybody. I mean he chokes one guy.

ADF: He talks tough.

GL: Yeah, but he really doesn't do anything. So it'd be good that we actually see him do some evil things. Or you know what else we can do? Might be a little hokey, but let's say we arrange it so that something... so that Luke is caught somewhere on something. We get to the temple or whatever and they go for the crystal and Luke gets trapped in some kind of fiendish device. A big rock comes down on his toe or something and he's straining to pull himself loose. And then Vader shows up and says, "Oh, now I've got you." And the princess is forced to fight Vader. Luke is standing there trying to pull his toe out and Vader knocks her down...

ADF: He's playing with her really....

GL: I think she could desperately fight him but he is really overpowering and beats her up pretty bad and...

ADF: Another reason to hate Vader...

GL: Yeah. Rather than having him cut her in half, she just gets pummeled about a lot. Although it wouldn't be too good to have a bloody freak in the movie. But she's pretty much battered up...

ADF: Burns...

GL: Yeah. She's really beat up, desperate, she's sort of dragging herself around on the floor in really bad shape and finally Luke jumps down and starts on Vader. And Luke kills Vader in the end. I was thinking of the last image of having her be this bloody, battered, beat-up babe. Not very romantic. I don't know whether I dare do something quite that extreme. We could have the last image be them getting into the spaceship and taking off, flying into the sunset.

ADF: I like very much the idea of Vader beating her up and cutting her up. And then Luke gets the sword from her at the last minute and Vader is about to cut her head off or something, and Luke kills Vader. And then Luke uses the crystal to heal the princess. Everybody breathes this big sigh of relief. That will make everybody feel real good.

GL: It's a little strong, but I'm willing to go with it.

ADF: I don't think it's too strong. He's not bringing her back from the dead.

THE REAL VILLAIN

ADF: Anyway, Luke encounters Vader there and kills him. What happens at the end? Do they keep the crystal? Is Luke going to keep this crystal? Is he going to give it to some local people who deserve it? I think it would be wonderful, after all this fighting, if someone drops the thing and breaks it.

GL: That's always for me very disappointing. I think it would be fun if he just kept it. He has it and it makes him go up one more level... A little halo appears around his head.

ADF: Well, not Superman.

GL: Oh, no no no. He just goes from level 2 to level 3.

ADF: Maybe we could have something interesting visually. I want something more than just:

Vader's dead and Luke pulls out the crystal from the eye of the idol.

GL: He takes the big crystal down and it glows and he looks into it and he sees Ben Kenobi.

ADF: Ben Kenobi, yes. And everyone in the audience can have a flicker of recognition from the first movie. Would you want to do it, though?

GL: Hmm... No. It's a little hokey. The whole thing is that it's about the Force, which I have a tendency to avoid. With Luke killing Vader, standing there with his severed head and his sword stuck in his gut—that's the heroic image in the end—David and Goliath. Goliath is dead and David is standing there. But the overtone of it all is that there will be another [villain] soon. So he's got the crystal but the crystal will only help him fight the Force, which is even bigger than

Vader. It just gives him one more little weapon to use against the the evil Force, the dark side of the Force.

You hold it on a shot—it's the Frank Frazetta moment—of Luke holding the princess and the crystal in one hand and the sword in the other and the princess is holding on to him.

ADF: And the natives are cheering.

GL: And he's got the foot on Vader.

ADF: You want a voice thundering through the room or something?

GL: No. A little thunder clap or something. 🗨️

Thanks to Pablo Hidalgo for his input.

EXPANDED

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on twitter [@jwrinzler](#)

UNIVERSE



This page and opposite: The climactic duel between Luke and Vader from the Dark Horse adaptation.

A NEW HOPE

THE IMPACT OF *STAR WARS* RPGS AND HOW THEY SHAPED THE EXPANDED UNIVERSE

BRYAN YOUNG PICKS UP THE STORY OF *STAR WARS* ROLEPLAYING GAMES, BRINGING THE STORY UP TO DATE.



When Wizards of the Coast said they were no longer going to be producing stuff for *Star Wars*," says Steve Horvath from Fantasy Flight Games, "I contacted Lucasfilm that very day, and we started having conversations, and we feel honored and fortunate they liked what we had to say, and we moved forward on the deal. We're huge fans and we only work on licensed products we have a lot of passion for because we don't treat them like licensed product. We treat them with the same love and respect and devotion and passion as our own stuff."

Over the last few years, Fantasy Flight has produced three games in the

Star Wars Expanded Universe. The first was *Star Wars: X-Wing Miniatures*. It puts you in the cockpit of some of the most intense dogfight battles ever made possible on the top of a table. With its ease of learning, smooth gameplay, and preposterously high fun-factor, *X-Wing* became an instant hit for players of all ages. Next came the latest iteration of customizable card games set in the *Star Wars* Universe. Card games, dating back to the days when Decipher was making them, have always been a useful repository for background information culled from the RPGs. When every alien in the cantina warranted their own card, that background information had to come from somewhere.



STAR WARS
EDGE OF THE EMPIRE
BEGINNER GAME

**KRAYT FANG
AND LANDING BAY**



Opposite page:
Fantasy Flight's
beautiful Alderaan
Falcon miniature.
This page: The interior
of the *Krayt Fang* from
Fantasy Flight's *Edge of
Empire* game.

The third *Star Wars* game to come from Fantasy Flight is the latest in a long line of influential RPGs set in the universe. Their first book, called *Edge of the Empire*, brings a brand new flavor and style of roleplaying to fans with brand new rules and fascinating dynamics based on fate and destiny, unique to this new experience.

It would have been a daunting challenge to boil 30 years of *Star Wars* and 20 years of *Star Wars* roleplaying into an all new experience, but Horvath and the crew at Fantasy Flight are all fans and more than up for the challenge.

"Of course it's daunting," Horvath explains, "and that's one of the reasons we broke this experience up into three books."

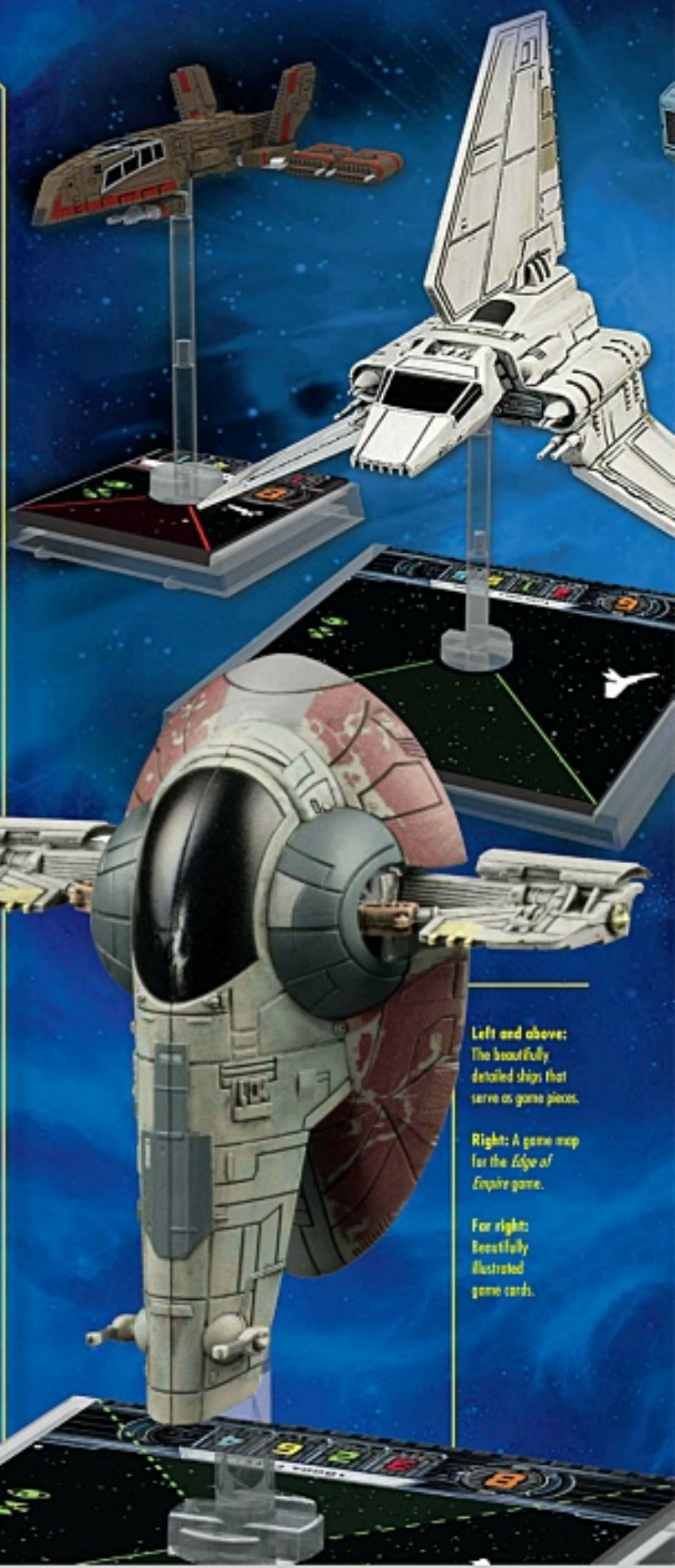
The first of the three core RPG books, *Edge of Empire*, was released over the summer of 2013 and it explores in intricate detail the outer rim of the galaxy and the criminal underworld of smugglers, bounty hunters, and colonists. The next book, to be released in 2014 focuses on life working with the Rebel Alliance, but we're told it's only a coincidence that 2014 also sees the release of the new animated series *Star Wars Rebels*. After that, in 2015—the same year Episode VII will be introduced to the world—Fantasy Flight plans to release the third core rulebook, expanding on the world of Jedi and users of the Force. Taken together, all three books will paint a picture of the *Star Wars* universe for fans and roleplayers alike that will go into a level of detail never before seen.

"THE ONLY WAY TO GO AS DEEP AND IMMERSIVE AS WE WANT TO GO IS TO BREAK THE UNIVERSE UP INTO THREE GAME LINES."—STEVE HORVATH

Horvath reasons that, "The only way to go as deep and immersive as we want to go is to break the universe up into three game lines. Everybody wants to tell their own *Star Wars* story, and we feel this is the best way to allow fans to do that."

But just because the universe has been expanded already by the RPGs, don't expect the team at Fantasy Flight to rest easy. They have busy days ahead, pushing the envelope on the universe we all love so much even further. "There's still plenty of new material to explore," says Horvath, "so we'll definitely be pushing boundaries. We'll also be giving people the material that they want as well. This won't be an alien *Star Wars* that people won't recognize. It will have the blend of familiar and brand new."

Over the years, *Star Wars* roleplaying games have enabled fans to tell their own stories in a galaxy far, far away. They've also served as important tools and building blocks for the creative personalities tasked with telling the next generation of *Star Wars* stories in every medium. And these books, long out of print or brand new, still find uses as reference material for every facet of the expansion of *Star Wars*.



Left and above:
The beautifully
detailed ships that
serve as game pieces.

Right: A game map
for the *Edge of
Empire* game.

For right:
Beautifully
illustrated
game cards.




NOBODY'S FOOL

COST 15

Passive, Ranked
The difficulty of any Charm, Coercion, or Deception checks attempted against the character is upgraded once for each rank of Nobody's Fool.

EXPLORER: Trader

11

12/20

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SMOOTH TALKER

COST 5

Active (Incidental), Ranked
When a character acquires this talent, he chooses one skill: Charm, Coercion, Negotiation, or Deception. When making checks with that skill, he may spend Ⓢ to gain additional ★ equal to his ranks in Smooth Talker.

EXPLORER: Trader

4/20

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BARRAGE

COST 5

Passive, Ranked

Add one damage per rank of Barrage to one hit of successful Ranged (Heavy) or Gunnery attacks with non-starship/vehicle weapons at long or extreme range.

HIRED GUN: Bodyguard

STREET SMARTS

COST 5

Passive, Ranked

Remove 1 per rank of Street Smarts from any Streetwise or Knowledge (Underworld) checks the character attempts.

FRINGER: Fringer

4/20

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ALWAYS IN MOTION IS THE FUTURE...

"With all the activity that's been happening with Lucasfilm lately," Pablo Hidalgo hints, "I've been asked to write all sorts of briefing documents introducing newcomers to the Star Wars brand, and helping lay out the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of Star Wars. To this day, I still refer to similar text advising gamemasters in the 1987 roleplaying game on that very matter."

A LIFETIME COLLECTING DUST ON COLLECTORS' SHELVES IS NOT THE FATE FOR STAR WARS ROLEPLAYING.

FROM THE CORE BOOK

"You must keep the game in the Star Wars spirit. The stories you create with your players must be the ones which could fit comfortably on the screen with the Lucasfilm logo at the end. If they aren't—well you may still have fun playing them, but you aren't really playing Star Wars. How can you do that? Whenever you're given a chance, use something from the movies."

Many Star Wars fans will keep forever their collections of roleplaying books, for use as reference, or to look back and explore the Star Wars universe on their own. But a lifetime collecting dust on collectors' shelves is not the fate for Star Wars roleplaying. As new Star Wars shows and movies come out, roleplaying games will help us fill in the gaps in our knowledge and help us push the universe further and further.

Fantasy Flight Games is picking up the legacy left by guys like Bill Slavicsek and Greg Costikyan and carried on by authors like Timothy Zahn. They'll help organize the universe for us as it expands, and through them fans will be able to live in the adventures of Star Wars, old and new. Fantasy Flight's Steve Horvath reassures us, "We have plenty more Star Wars stuff to come out, but nothing we've announced. We're very excited for new content to come out over the next few years. I feel like we've barely scratched the surface, and there is so much more we can do and explore, and we're excited to be on this journey." So are we. 🌟

EXPANDED

Start playing a Star Wars RPG today! Find out how at www.fantasyflightgames.com

UNIVERSE

Above: Cards highlighting action (left) and intrigue (right) along with a meticulously detailed A-wing fighter.

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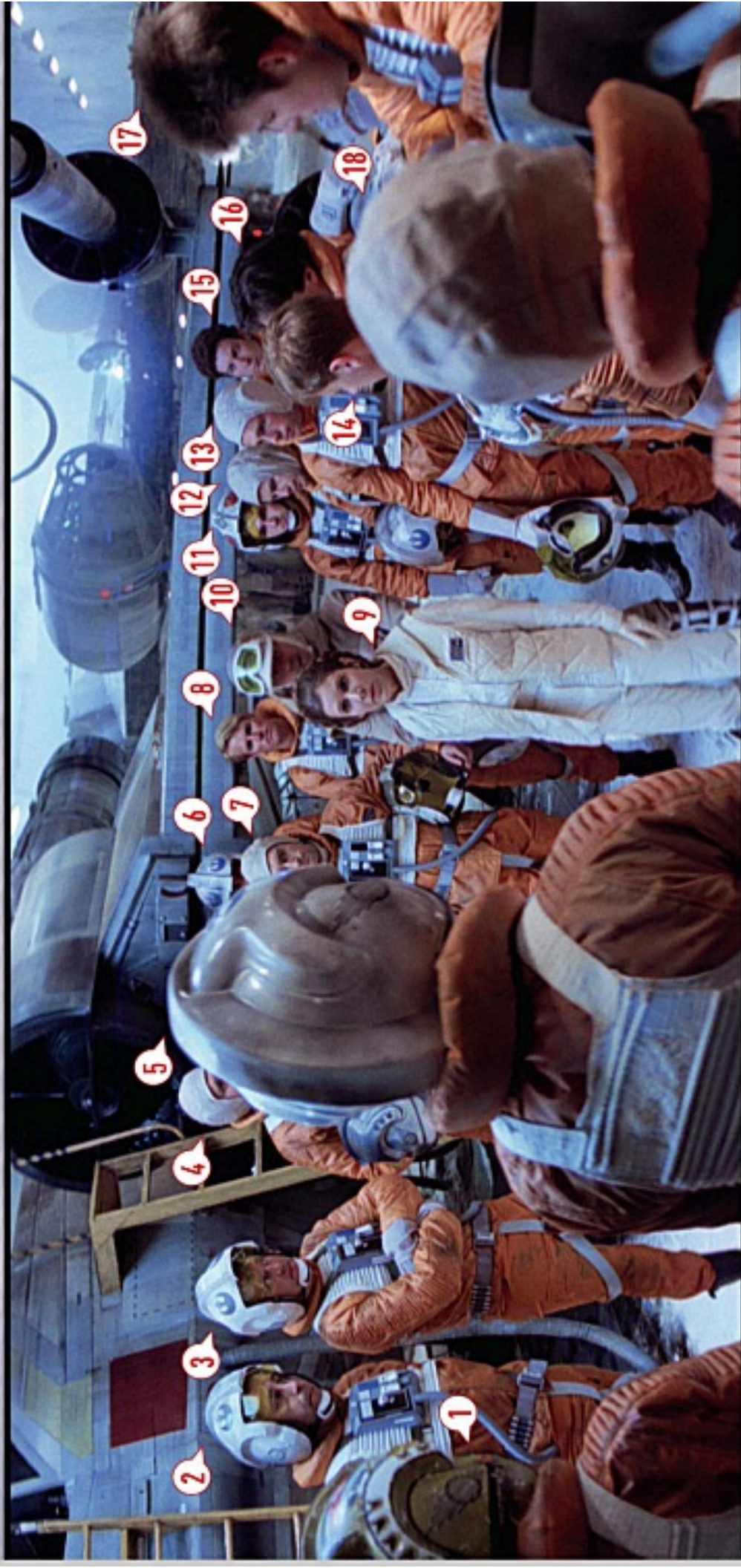
Available on Kindle, Nook, and Kobo.

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CLEARANCE FOR IMMEDIATE LAUNCH

ROGUES GALLERY



RESEARCH BY

TIM VEEKHOVEN,

KEVIN BEENTJES AND

SANDER DE LANGE, WITH THANKS
TO LELAND Y. CHEE

This screenshot from *The Empire Strikes Back* contains a number of unnamed characters. Author Jason Fry named many of the pilots of Rogue Group in *The Essential Guide to Warfare*, so this provides a great opportunity to link these names to pilots in this shot.

REBELS IN RETREAT

During their short time on Hoth members of Rogue Flight, Blue Squadron and Green Squadron were pressed into service as Rogue Group, doubling up as pilots and gunners for the Alliance's T-47 airspeeders. When Darth Vader's Death Squadron blockaded the ice planet, the remaining pilots of Blue and Green Squadron faced the difficult task of either piloting or escorting the GR-75 Medium Transports past the Imperial blockade. Luckily, they were protected in their mission by the powerful blasts of the v-150 Planetary Defender Ion Cannon.



1. NICHOS PANIB (GREEN 4)—VIRUJANSI

This noble painted his helmet in honor of Garven Dreis, an old friend of his mother's family.

2. VEKOZEY KABIR (ROGUE 8)—AHAKISTA

An older pilot who worked with resistance groups on his home planet before joining the Rebel Alliance.

3. BERYANN RALEG (BLUE 8)—TIISHERAAN

Raleg joined the Alliance with Bren Derlin after the assassination of former Senator Galen Derlin.

4. ZEY SENESCA (ROGUE 2)—KESTIC STATION

Senesca led the patrol that discovered Han Solo and Luke Skywalker, who was suffering from dornio-shock.

5. JEK PUGILIO (ROGUE 11)—GLOVA

Hoping to save Lenso's career, General Rieekan asked the soft-spoken Pugilio to help Lenso.

6. KULBART ZAMOON (BLUE 12)—ERILNAR

After the horrible terrorist action on his home planet Erilnar, Zmoon blamed the Empire for not interfering and joined the rebellion.

7. WEDGE ANTILLES (ROGUE THREE)—CORELLIA

A survivor of the Battle of Yavin, Antilles and his gunner, Wes Janson, successfully managed to trip the Imperial Walker Blizzard 2.

8. ADAM SWIFTGALE (GREEN 3)—MANDA

A former Rockhopper jockey whose experience proved very useful when taming and riding tauntauns.

9. PRINCESS LEIA ORGANA—ALDERAAN

After the destruction of Alderaan, Princess Leia Organa became more than ever a symbol of hope and leadership for the Rebel Alliance.

10. MAJOR BREN DERLIN—TIISHERAAN

A Field Officer who was Head of Security & Operations of Echo Base.

11. HABEER ZIGNEAN (GREEN 5)—ORD MIRIT

A rookie pilot who joined the rebellion to avenge his father's death.

12. DAK RALTER (ROGUE 4)—CORUSCANT

Ralter grew up in an Imperial penal colony, but managed to escape. Served with the Tierfon Yellow Aces before joining Rogue Group as Luke Skywalker's gunner.

13. DEREK 'HOBIE' KLIVIAN

(ROGUE 4)—RALLTIIR

A former friend of Biggs Darklighter at Preflight Naval Academy. When he was too ill to fly, Luke Skywalker took his place in Red Squadron during the Battle of Yavin.

14. TARRIN DATCH (ROGUE 10)—DURO

Datch joined the Rebel Alliance after helping the wounded rebel agent Jan Ors. Datch was able to pilot the GR-75 Medium Transport, Thon's Orchard, past the Imperial blockade.

15. NALA HETSIME (ROGUE 7)—PA THO

A dour and laconic man, who was a mystery to his fellow pilots.

16. GEMMER SOJAN (BLUE 4)—CIRCARPOUS V

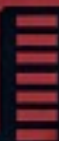
After successfully piloting the Bearing Lifter away from Hoth, Sojan helped to establish Haven Base at Arbra and flew an A-wing starfighter during the Battle of Endor.

17. WILL SCOTIAN (BLUE 3)—BRENTAAL IV

Scotian participated in the Battle of Gall as Rogue Two after the Battle of Hoth.


18. TENK LENSE (ROGUE 11)—GLOVA

A survivor of the Deretta Destroyers who suffered from flashbacks and who could no longer function as a gunner.



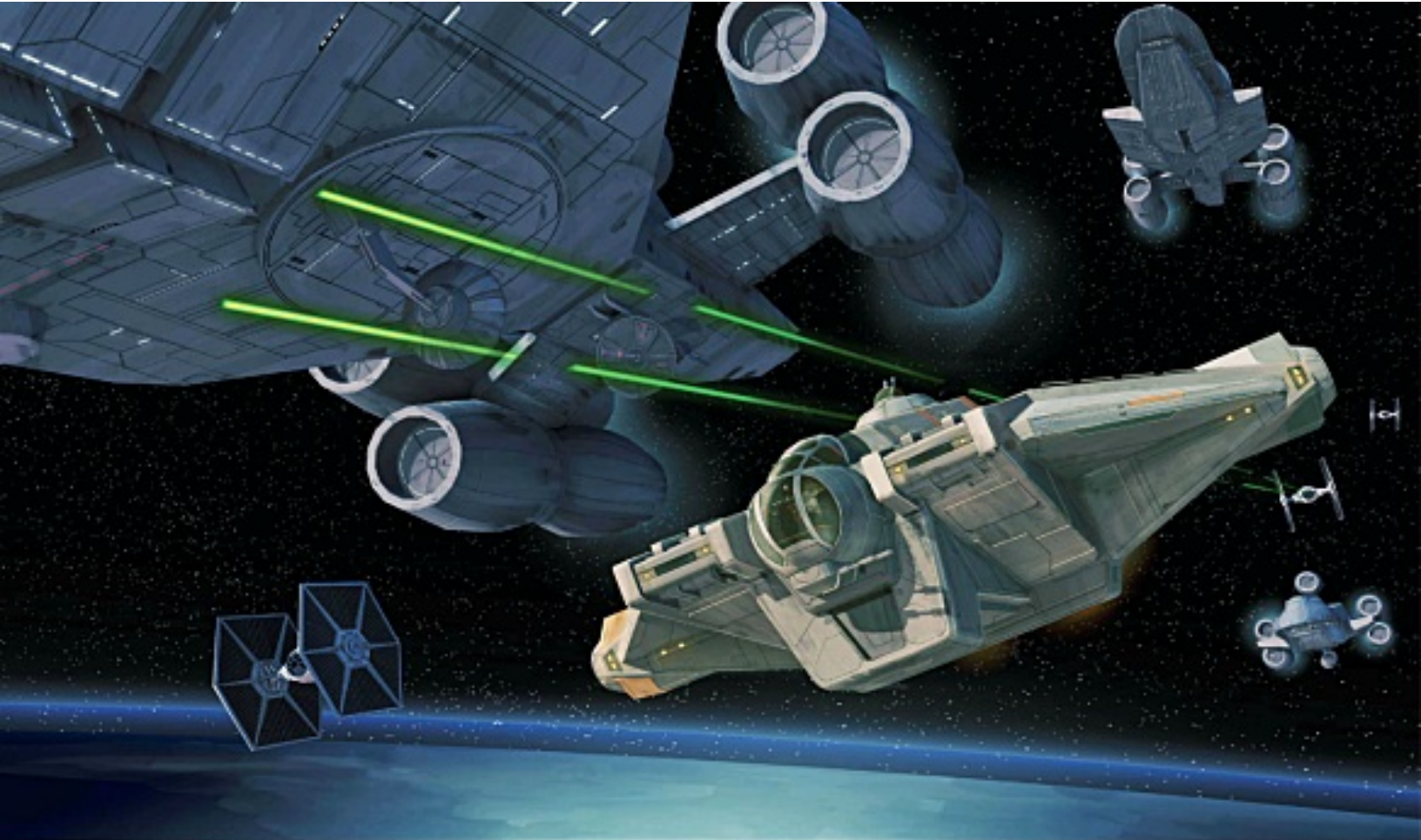
REIGNITING THE REBELLION!





GREG WEISMAN, EXECUTIVE
PRODUCER ON *STAR WARS*
REBELS, TAKES A RARE BREAK
FROM PRODUCTION TO TALK—IN
AN *INSIDER* EXCLUSIVE!
INTERVIEW BY
JONATHAN WILKINS





Star Wars Insider: Are you a Star Wars fan and is this your dream job?

Greg Weisman: Yes, I am, and yes!

SWI: How have you prepared for working on the show?

GW: I've been a fan since before *A New Hope* was called *A New Hope*. I saw Episode IV the day it originally came out; I made my mom take me. We lived in the San Fernando Valley and it wasn't playing in the Valley the first day, so we went to another theater to see a matinee show.

When I got the job on *Rebels*, the first thing I did was to re-watch all six films. I'd seen a few scattered episodes of *The Clone Wars*, so I started watching all of it.

SWI: Do you have any favorite episodes?

GW: I think it's hard to top the ones that are focused on Ahsoka. She's the character that pops the most for me and is the most fun.

SWI: Has anything surprised you about revisiting the movies again?

GW: It's interesting because I've still got my old

VHS tapes of the original trilogy, so I've seen those and then I've also seen the Special Editions. Some of the things that jumped out to me are the changes between the movies as they originally came out and the Special Edition versions. Han shoots first! There are little things I've noticed that I guess I hadn't really focused on or realized.

I loved *A New Hope* when it came out, and I loved *Empire* even more. Those two are still my favorites and that's really the tone we're going for in *Star Wars Rebels*. We're set between Episode III and Episode IV, but closer on the timeline to Episode IV.

Much of our inspiration, literally on a daily basis, comes from Ralph McQuarrie's old designs. One thing I didn't realize about Ralph's work was the amazing quantity of it. We had a story meeting up in San Francisco just last week and we were talking about a character that we're adding to the show in our twelfth episode of the series. Pablo Hidalgo and Dave Filoni pulled out these Ralph McQuarrie designs, and they were exactly what we needed.

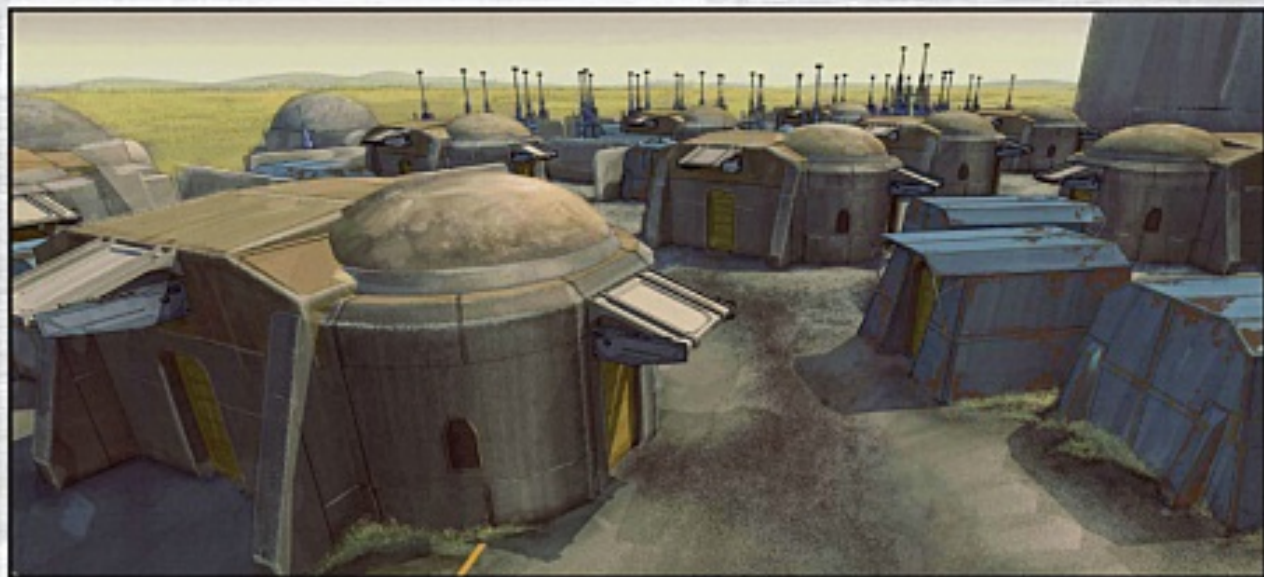
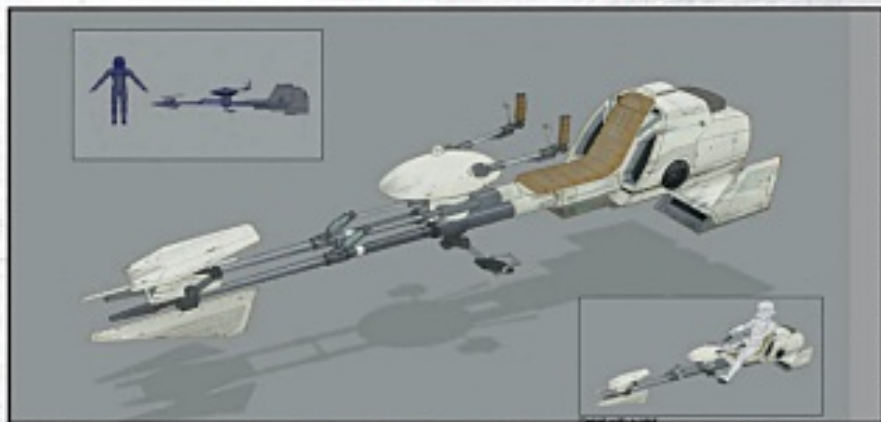
SWI: Is it helpful when there's such a rich vein of inspiration?

GW: Oh, definitely. Particularly for a guy like me that came up in comic books and animation; everything I do is very much visually inspired and works in concert with art. It's very exciting to have stuff to look at. We were creating a brand new character and before we'd even started, we had these great inspirational designs. If I've already got that look, then it's going to define a lot about how we're going to write that character.





**"MUCH OF OUR INSPIRATION
ON A DAILY BASIS
COMES FROM RALPH
MCQUARRIE'S DESIGNS."**



Opposite, above:
The *Gloss* on the
defensive, outrunning
Imperial forces!
Art by Andre Kirk.

Top right: Imperial
speeder bike concept
art by Chris Glenn.

Above: Imperial AT-DP
pilot character design
art by Amy Beth
Christensen.

Left: A poor, outlying
town on Lothal;
environment concept
art by Andre Kirk.

Far left: An Imperial
freighter with TIE
fighters docked.
Concept art by Pat
Presley.

Left: Wesley during
a story meeting. The
cards behind are notes
that plot out the many
character and story
arcs. The storyboards to
the left must remain
secret... for now.



SWI: You worked on many animated series. Is there something that's unique to *Star Wars*?

GW: *Star Wars* has this great canon full of fantastic archetypal characters, but also it's a fantastic galaxy to play in. It's got strong opposing forces in the Empire and the Rebel Alliance. What's fascinating to me is that in our series, we're going to really show the origins of the rebellion. When our series begins, it's not the Rebel Alliance yet; we start with a group of rebels. It'll be really interesting to show the progress of the Alliance forming, so I'm very excited about that.

SWI: Can you talk a little bit more about the dynamic between yourself, Dave Filoni, and Simon Kinberg?

GW: It's been fantastic. I'm the late arrival, relatively speaking. Dave and Simon really developed the show; I like to think I came in and was useful and helpful, but I arrived with a show that was already very much in place with great characters and a great setup. What the three of us then did was break down the season. We talked in great depth about the characters, looked at the artwork and all the designs that we had and continue to build on everyday.

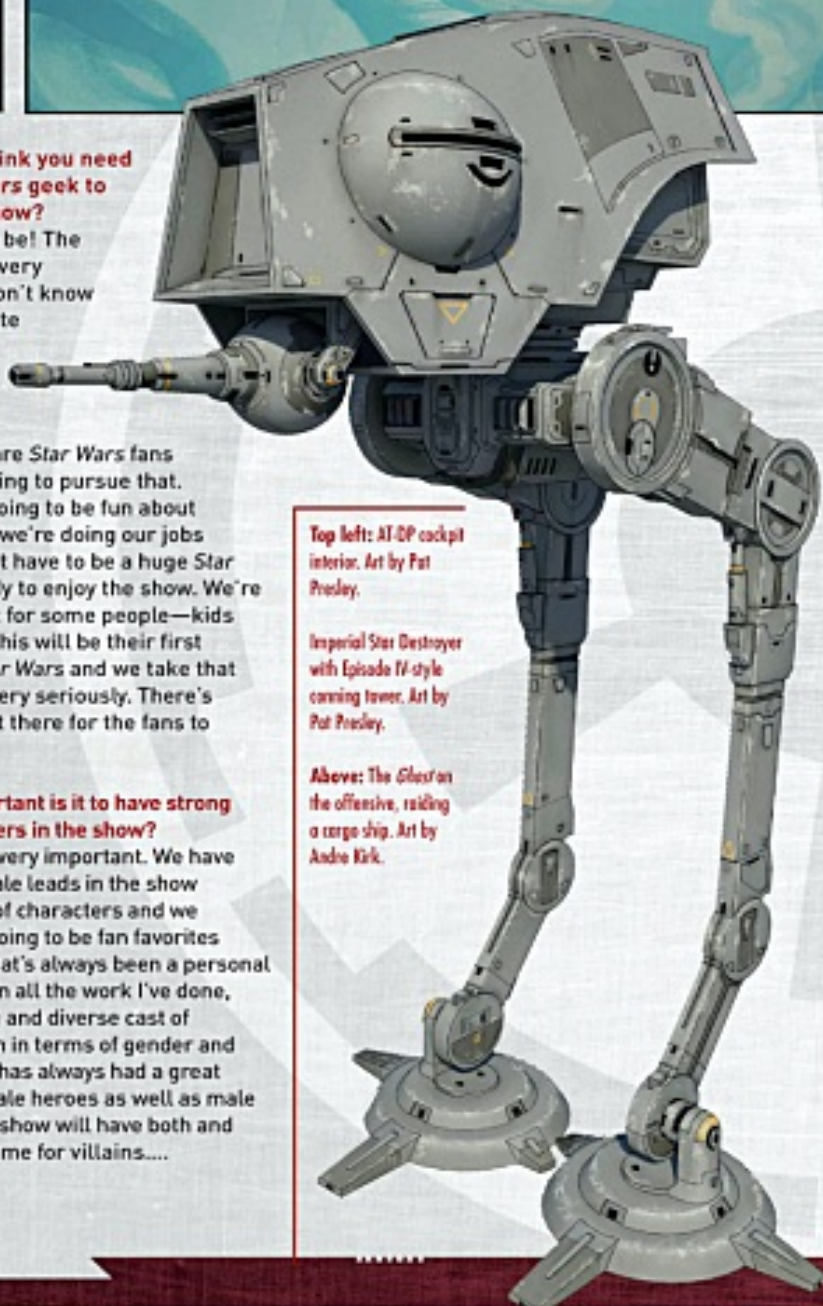
There's a lot of people involved working very hard; every one of them a huge, major, dedicated *Star Wars* geek without any exception, and all of them are just so glad and gratified to be part of this show at all.

SWI: Do you think you need to be a *Star Wars* geek to work on the show?

It's hard not to be! The enthusiasm is very contagious. I don't know if it's an absolute pre-requisite, but there are so many great talents out there who are *Star Wars* fans and who are going to pursue that. I think what's going to be fun about the show is—if we're doing our jobs right—you don't have to be a huge *Star Wars* fan already to enjoy the show. We're very aware that for some people—kids in particular—this will be their first exposure to *Star Wars* and we take that responsibility very seriously. There's going to be a lot there for the fans to enjoy as well.

SWI: How important is it to have strong female characters in the show?

GW: For us, it's very important. We have two strong female leads in the show among our set of characters and we think they are going to be fan favorites very quickly. That's always been a personal priority for me in all the work I've done, to have a strong and diverse cast of characters, both in terms of gender and race. *Star Wars* has always had a great tradition of female heroes as well as male heroes and our show will have both and that goes the same for villains....



Top left: AT-OT cockpit interior. Art by Pat Presley.

Imperial Star Destroyer with Episode IV-style conning tower. Art by Pat Presley.

Above: The Glixon on the offensive, raiding a cargo ship. Art by Andre Kirk.



GREG WEISMAN ON HUMOR IN STAR WARS

It's about a certain energy, a certain banter between characters. That energy is what we're trying to capture. It comes out of the characters, and the situations they find themselves in. As serious and dramatic as they are, there are moments of humor in them. I love the scene when the heroes are trying to bust Leia out of a Death Star brig and Han Solo is talking to the Imperials on the radio saying, "We're fine; how are you?" and the way Leia and Han went after each other—all this stuff has a lot of humor inherent in it and that's the kind of energy and tone we're trying to duplicate. I think we're going to have a great time with it. It comes out of character and feels real, so it's about the character first and how any character can be funny in the right situation. We're going to have plenty of light-hearted moments and even light-hearted moments in dark-hearted times and situations.

"I THINK *STAR WARS* WAS DOING THE KIND OF THING JOSS WHEDON DOES YEARS BEFORE JOSS WAS DOING IT."

Top right: Weisman plots out a story arc, while story development team member Pablo Hidalgo checks some facts!

Right: Lothal capital city alleyways. Environmental concept art by Andre Kirk.

Left and right: AT-DP (All Terrain Defense Pod) walker front and back. Art by Pat Presley.

SWI: Is there a knack for writing *Star Wars* dialogue?

GW: I'm a huge Joss Whedon fan, but I think *Star Wars* was doing the kind of thing that Joss does years before Joss was doing it, which is juxtaposing humor and drama, comedy and tragedy, side-by-side. The funny moments make the tragedy stand out and vice versa. Those things work together very well and that's always been what *Star Wars* is all about, particularly in its greatest moments.

SWI: Is there a line of dialogue or a scene in the original movies that you wish you'd written?

GW: I think one of the all time greatest moments in cinema history is the "I am your father," scene from *The Empire Strikes Back*. I'm the kind of guy—and was the kind of kid—who would guess at that kind of thing and I didn't. That achievement of surprising an audience with something that then feels so right is what I've striven for my entire career! 🙌

McQUARRIE REVISITED



STAR WARS INSIDER CONTINUES A SERIES OF SPECIAL FEATURES EXPLORING RARE WORK CREATED BY CONCEPT ARTIST EXTRAORDINAIRE RALPH MCQUARRIE. THIS ISSUE, WE PRESENT A NEW "PRODUCTION ILLUSTRATION" PAINTED BY RALPH'S FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE, ART DIRECTOR AND CONCEPT DESIGNER PAUL BATEMAN, BASED UPON RALPH'S ORIGINAL WORK.





Ralph McQuarrie's imagination was full of wonders, enough to fill several galaxies! He produced countless memorable, iconic designs for the original trilogy. An immediate fan favorite came in the menacing shape of the Imperial stormtroopers.

By the time the screenplay for *The Empire Strikes Back* arrived, it was clear that one of Ralph's first tasks would be to design new stormtrooper armor for the spectacular Battle of Hoth sequence. With the help of Joe Johnston, a number of snowtrooper designs were created. Many have become familiar to fans in the form of action figures, busts, and even masks. However, more designs remain unseen.

IN SEARCH OF ECHOES...

One of the most unique and distinctive trooper designs was a concept Ralph created for a snowtrooper general. Though he started out looking like a very traditional (if futuristic) samurai, he gradually evolved into everyone's favorite bounty hunter Boba Fett (though his appearance changed a great deal along the way).

Among the many pages of thumbnails Ralph created for *The Empire Strikes Back*, a handful show the Imperial forces searching for, and advancing on "Echo Base." Some of the earlier concepts show the Imperials arriving not only by AT-AT, but also in large armored ground vehicles. I decided to use a couple of these thumbnails as a starting point for this painting.

I hope you enjoy my interpretation of Ralph's concepts. I'd like to dedicate this painting to the 501st for all their wonderful work [the RMQ troopers, especially]. They make me proud to be a fan. Next issue, we explore the hidden alleys of Mos Eisley. 🍷



From top: Ralph McQuarrie's original snowtrooper sketches, created for *The Empire Strikes Back*; snowtrooper thumbnail sketches for *The Empire Strikes Back*.

ABOUT PAUL BATEMAN

Paul is an art director and concept artist based near Pinewood Studios in London. He can often be heard on the popular podcast Rebel Force Radio. Follow him on Twitter @PaulRMQ

AUTHORS OF THE EXPANDED UNIVERSE: CHRIS CLAREMONT

BY MICHAEL KOGGE

COMIC BOOK CREATOR CHRIS CLAREMONT IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS GROUNDBREAKING WORK ON THE X-MEN, BUT HE ALSO MADE HIS MARK ON THE *STAR WARS* GALAXY!

When comic book fans hear the name Chris Claremont, *Star Wars* isn't what immediately springs to mind. His 17 years recounting the adventures of another pantheon of heroes, misunderstood mutants by names such as Wolverine, Phoenix, Rogue, and Gambit, have placed Claremont in the upper echelon of comic book scribes. Yet while writing *The Uncanny X-Men*, he also dipped into other universes, such as *Star Wars*, penning a couple of scripts for the Marvel comic series. Scant though these contributions may appear, one must remember the wise words of a diminutive Jedi: "Size matters not." Claremont's *Star Wars* stories are some of the most memorable comics in the entire 107-issue run.

LONDON-BORN, LONG ISLAND-RAISED

Considering his is one of the foremost names in American comics, Claremont regards his British upbringing to be essential in his development as a writer. Born in London in November 1950, Claremont was three when his family immigrated to Long Island, New York. Despite the move, he maintained a deep connection with England. "I grew up reading British comics, courtesy of my grandmother who would send me copies of stuff so I wouldn't lose track of what was happening at home," Claremont says.

British comics gave him a broader perspective, both of the world and story-telling than what he'd read in the United States. "At the time, American comics were very boring," Claremont recalls. "It was like watching episodic television, where every issue, every episode, you had an adventure, but the character wore the same costume or suit of clothes and did the same things, and the outcome was invariably the same. In my mind, [British comics] were a lot more fun and a lot more positively serious."

Of his grandmother's mailings, Claremont enjoyed the children's comic strip magazine *Eagle* the most. Founded by an Anglican vicar, *Eagle* was published as a decent, Christian response to the American horror comics of the 1950s that exploited gruesome and sensational topics for content. *Eagle* combined entertainment with education, featuring historical fantasy series such as Frank Bellamy's *Heros the Spartan* along with one-page biographies of luminaries such as Winston Churchill and Jesus of Nazareth.

Claremont particularly liked *Eagle*'s "Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future" comic, about an English astronaut who served the Interplanet Space Fleet. Dan Dare would have missions around the solar system, and though trained in jujitsu, endeavored to find non-violent solutions to confrontations. Claremont says, "It was the comic equivalent of Heinlein and Arthur Clarke," two of his favorite authors, and the comic compelled him to write his own science fiction tales.





Left: Legendary comic book writer Chris Claremont.

Below: Marvel comics' *Star Wars*, as seen through the eyes of Chris Claremont. Clockwise, from left: *Star Wars* #17, a special collection reprinting a tale previously available only in Marvel UK's *Star Wars Weekly* 107-115; *Star Wars Weekly* #12.

A MARVEL START

Claremont's first professional sale came at age 22, when *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* published his sci-fi story "Psimed" in April 1973. At that time, he also had aspirations to be an actor, but had trouble being cast in anything other than dinner theater. It was a college job as an editorial assistant at Marvel Comics that opened the doors to his creative talents.

Marvel editor Roy Thomas [also writer of the first 10 issues of the *Star Wars* comic, see *Star Wars Insider* #142] saw Claremont's potential and hired him to write an issue of *Daredevil*. Soon Claremont was scripting Marvel's new series *Iron Fist* and, in 1975, the young writer received the assignment that would make his career: *X-Men*. Sales of *X-Men* had been declining, but Claremont turned it around, envisioning he was writing the Great American Novel in comic book form.

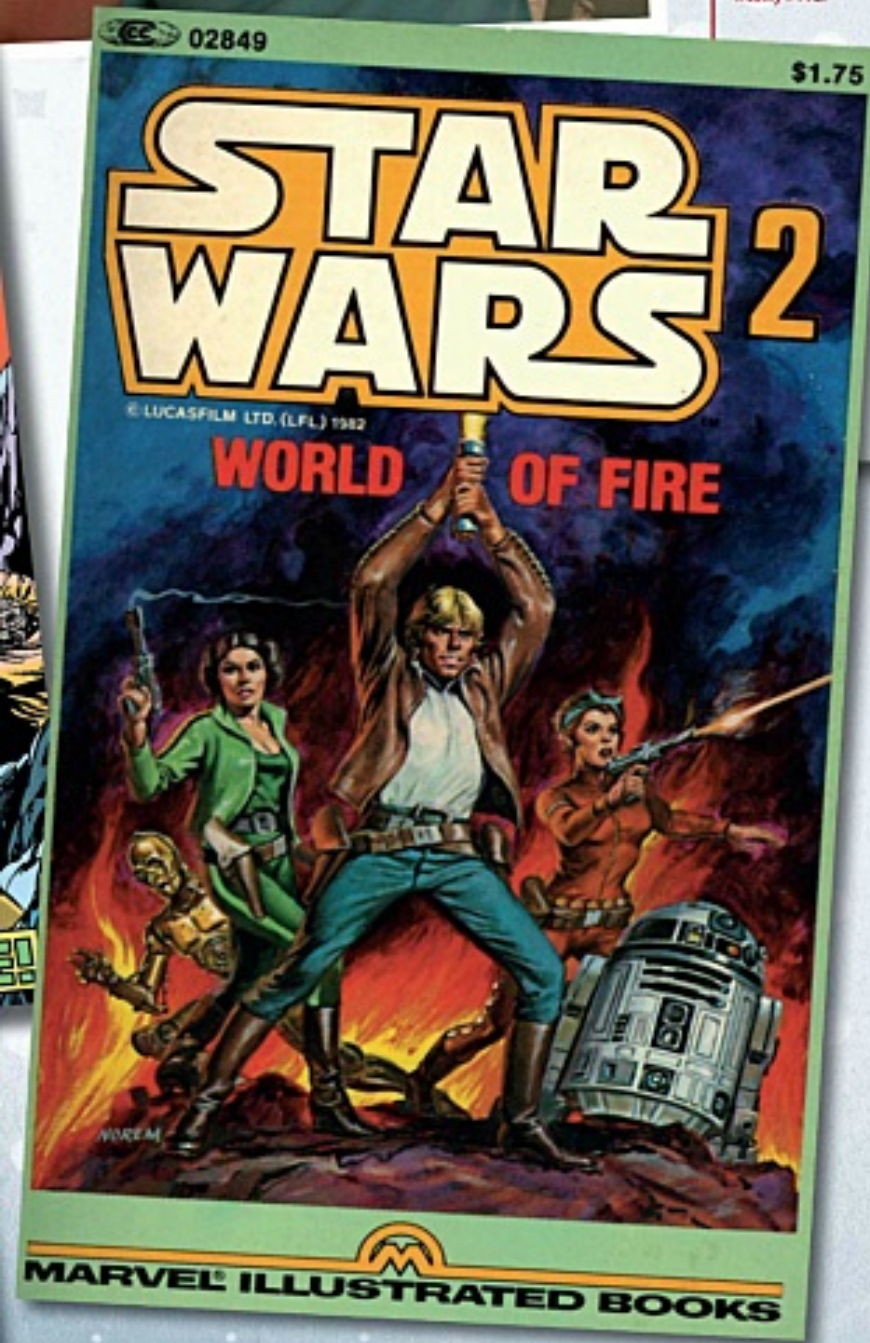
CLAREMONT DOUBTED WHETHER THE DIRECTOR OF A MUSIC-BASED DRAMA LIKE *AMERICAN GRAFFITI* COULD PULL OFF A GENRE FILM.

10.30 AM, 5/25/1977

Claremont's passion for science fiction did not wane while headlining *X-Men*. He knew Roy Thomas and Howard Chaykin were working on a tie-in to a film called *The Star Wars* and that it had been a point of contention between Thomas and Stan Lee. Lee believed Logan's Run, another film for which Marvel had licensed the rights, would be the company's next big blockbuster comic book. Claremont himself doubted whether the director of a music-based drama like *American Graffiti* could pull off a genre film or if it would be more like a "rockabilly" space opera. But Claremont was intrigued by the film's concept, because it seemed to aim for the same sense of wonder of the Dan Dare comics. On May 25, 1977, Claremont cut work to see the first morning screening of *Star Wars* at the Astor Plaza Loews.

The second the immense Star Destroyer thundered onto the screen, Claremont knew he was watching something special, and held his breath for the duration of the picture like the rest of the audience. When he came out, the line for the next screening roped around the block—and didn't go away for four months. "They put the last show on at half-one in the morning, you had the line. The first show came up at eight-thirty in the morning, you had the line," he says. "And the comic lasted for 12 years."

Logan's Run, meanwhile, ran for only seven issues, ending in July 1977.





CLAREMONT ASSERTS THAT HIS GOAL WAS JUST TO HAVE FUN....

PINCH-HITTING FOR ARCHIE GOODWIN

For Marvel to publish its many comics on schedule every month, guest writers and artists often did single "fill-in" issues to alleviate the workload for the main team assigned to that title. *Star Wars* was handled no differently from other Marvel titles. "If you had a story, they could use it," says Claremont. "The challenge was there was no universe at the time. You had George's notes for the concepts and the characters, but Marvel didn't have significant access to that, certainly not the way the novelists did."

Not having access to those notes in those early days actually gave Marvel creative license in *Star Wars* that few have had since. "The advantage, like it or not, for Lucasfilm working with Marvel, was it that exposed the canon to a succession of young writers who were totally in love with the concepts," Claremont says. "Everyone kind of lived, breathed, ate *Star Wars*, and brought to it the sense of what's the universe look like? What could we do to make it cool?"

Claremont's first *Star Wars* credit came with November 1978's "Crucible." He provided the issue's plot for Archie Goodwin, who had become the lead writer on *Star Wars* after Roy Thomas. The story is quintessential Claremont, exploring unknown areas of a character's background. In the issue, Luke sits at the controls of the *Millennium Falcon*, reminiscing about his former life on Tatooine, moisture farming for Uncle Owen and racing Skyhoppers with his Anchorhead friends. Similar scenes re-occur in the first episode of the *Star Wars* radio drama, and one wonders if Claremont's story inspired radio writer Brian Daley, which would make this crossover the first between Expanded Universe projects.

From top left: The king-size *Star Wars* annual that featured some intriguing revelations about Han Solo; Leia takes center stage in "The Last Gift From Alderaan"; Leia's sister, Azen Peacebringer, swings into action in this repurposed art from the canceled *John Carter, Warlord of Mars* comic; the villainous General Sk'or features on the cover of *Star Wars* #54; the explosive cover of *Star Wars Weekly* #111.

LONG HUNTS

Claremont's next *Star Wars* outing came a year later when he wrote the king-size annual, "The Long Hunt," joined by Steve Leialoha inking Mike Vosberg's pencils. This story occurred outside of the series' regular continuity, pitting Han, Luke, and Leia against an old enemy of Han's: the bat-winged Kharys, the "Majestrix" of Skye. Claremont also continued to dig into the characters' histories. Not only did he reveal another piece of Han's past—a former flame named Katya—but the world of Skye had a unique connection to Darth Vader, and consequently, to young Luke Skywalker.

Claremont asserts that his goal was just to have fun creating a *Star Wars* story suited to the strengths of the comic book medium. "The one infinite advantage comics has over prose and especially over film itself, is the ability to present—especially in science fiction—alien worlds, alien cultures, physiognomy, and physical relationships in a way that would be infinitely harder and infinitely more expensive on film," Claremont says. "Mike and Steve could create a winged adversary who was 'way cool.' We could figure out how we could make her look like a naturally-winged hominid, rather than an actor wearing a pair of wings stuck to her back."

"The Long Hunt" has permeated *Star Wars* lore since, influencing the generation of *Star Wars* writers who grew up reading Marvel comics. "I put *Star Wars* Annual #1 up there with the very best of the Marvels," says Abel G. Peña, who added to the legend of Skye in his own *Star Wars* work. "Claremont again gives us a pivotal story in Luke Skywalker's continuing evolution as the Hero of Heroes. He gives us Kharys, who is not just a compelling villain, but the first pupil of Darth Vader and a female one at that. He shows us Han before he hooked up with Chewbacca, as well as one of the scoundrel's ex-girlfriends—who was black. That may seem shrug-worthy now, but this was the 70s. And he practically predicted the prophecy of the Chosen One 20 years ahead of the prequels!"



JOHN CARTER OF STAR WARS

Gaps between schedules necessitated that the UK's *Star Wars Weekly* not only re-publish the American comic, but print stories of its own. The deadline could be so tight that writers and artists often were assigned to an issue at the last moment. Claremont barely remembers writing the story "World of Fire" for issues #107-115 of the magazine, which would be collected in the Marvel Illustrated graphic novel, *Star Wars 2: World of Fire*.

Issues 53 and 54 of the American monthly, however, remain clear in Claremont's memory. In addition to *X-Men*, Claremont was also writing *John Carter, Warlord of Mars*, based on the Edgar Rice Burroughs novels that had inspired parts of Lucas's *Star Wars*. Poor sales forced the title to end in October 1979, though artist Carmine Infantino had finished most of the art for the Claremont-scripted annual. As Marvel didn't like 30 fully-pencilled pages sitting "dead" in a drawer, it was suggested they be used for *Star Wars*.

Claremont re-wrote the script to set it in the *Star Wars* galaxy, turning bare-chested John Carter into "Aron Peacebringer," a noble warlord on Shiva IV who rescues Princess Leia. Infantino's art was tweaked, with the female lead—formerly a young NASA astronaut—made to look like Leia, while all various Martians were transformed into Shiva's native population. Since an annual comprised only one-and-a-third regular issues, Walter Simonson came aboard and mimicked Infantino's style to complete the story. As some fans observed in the letters section, the two issues were a wonderful homage to the Mars novels, with John Carter literally becoming a *Star Wars* hero.

FROM STAR WARS TO SHADOW WARS

Claremont's association with Lucasfilm didn't end with *Star Wars*. Due to the success of the *Star Wars* fiction line, Lucasfilm sought to expand the universe of one of its other film properties, *Willow*. Bantam Books recommended Claremont, who had retired from *X-Men* to write his own projects. On April 1, 1994, Claremont traveled to Skywalker Ranch for a day-long conference with George Lucas, and the two brainstormed the backbone for a trilogy of

fantasy novels known as the *Chronicles of the Shadow War*.

Claremont spent much of the mid-1990s writing the novels. "The original restriction on the concept was that nothing from the movie could be used in the books. Lucas wanted no confusion between the two," says Claremont. Willow Ufgood even received a name change to "Thorn Drumheller." Nonetheless, after Claremont had turned in the first draft, the editorial team saw the need for greater connection to the film. So Claremont wrote an extended prologue that brought Madmartigan back into the story and tied-up loose ends with the film.

The trilogy sold well, with over 200,000 copies of the first novel, *Shadow Moon*, in print, vindicating Lucasfilm and Bantam's decision to expand that universe.

CLAREMONT THE FAN

After decades of writing for shared universes, Claremont now prefers to concentrate on creating his own worlds in original novels and comics. Still, his love for *Star Wars* is never far—just not as a creator, but rather as a fan hungrily waiting for the next iteration. "If JJ Abrams called up and asked to work on the screenplay, that'd be cool," says Claremont, with a laugh. "[But] I'd have more fun sitting there with the audience and seeing what someone else is playing with." 🍌

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EXCLUSIVE FICTION

THE SYROX REDEMPTION

BY JOE SCHREIBER
WITH ART BY JOHN VANFLEET



There's an inmate like me in every prison across the galaxy, I suppose—I'm the one who can get it for you. Glitterstim, juri juice, or maybe just a flimsiplast from the Core Worlds, if you're partial to that. Since my arrival here, I've smuggled in everything from shimmersilk slippers to spiced mynock wing for a Cyblocian assassin from the Meridian sector, who wanted to celebrate his birthday in style. With the exception of weapons and hard drugs, I can get my hands on just about any kind of contraband you might want. So when a new con named Waleed Nagma came up to me in the mess hall and asked if I could find him a bulb of Anzati snot garlic, I told him it would be no problem. And it wasn't.

"You're Zero, aren't you?"

I glanced up from my tray, taking my time, and favored him with an easy smile.

"Depends," I said. "Who's asking?"

He examined my outstretched hand for a moment before reaching out to give it a quick, uneasy shake. His eight-fingered grip was cold and clammy. Like most new arrivals on the Hive, he was trying his hardest to come off tough, cool and imposing all at once, and it wasn't going well. I could already see droplets of sweat around his hairline and upper lip, and his eyes twitched too fast, showing too much white around the edges.

"I heard you can get certain things," he said.

"Well," I blinked at him, still smiling, the picture of serene innocence. "I'm not sure where you might have heard such a rumor. I'm just another happy face here at the Hive."

"One of the guards told me about you," Nagma said.

"I need to place an order." He was so jumpy that he could barely stand still, and I guess I should've recognized trouble right away, but something about him had already intrigued me. "I can pay whatever it costs."

"Take it easy."

I said, nodding at the empty place across the table. "Just have yourself a seat. We've got nothing but time."

After another hesitant beat, Nagma bent down and folded his lanky torso into the bench opposite mine. There was a lot of him to fold. At full height he stood almost two meters tall, gangling and narrow-shouldered and so skinny that the orange prison-issue uniform hung off his frame like the flag of some defeated principality. The pale dome of his elongated bald head was threaded with fine blue veins, and when he leaned across to whisper in my ear, I could smell the fear coming off of his skin in waves—at least I thought it was fear. Looking back, I had no idea how sick he was.

"How does this sort of thing usually work?" he asked, rummaging down into his uniform. "Do I pay you first, or—"

"Relax, friend." I locked my eyes onto his. "We hardly know each other. Tell me your story. Where you're from. That sort of thing."

He squinted at me. "What's that got to do with anything?"

"I like to be properly introduced to anybody that I do business with," I said. "It insures that I'm dealing only with clients of the highest moral fiber."

"The highest...?" He glanced at me for a second, bewildered, then let out a snort. The joke was that every convict here in Cog Hive Seven, all five hundred twenty-two of us, represented the scum of the galaxy—murderers, mercenaries and psychopaths of every stripe and species,

walking genetic disasters that wouldn't hesitate to slash your throat for half a credit, or no reason at all. Our one unifying trait was that no one would miss us. Which was why our esteemed warden, Sadiki Blirr, could run the Hive like she did, pitting us against one another in daily gladiatorial matches that had already become one of the galaxy's most lucrative gambling operations.

It didn't help that every inmate had a microscopic electrostatic charge injected directly into their heart upon arrival. A tiny explosive which could be triggered by any of the guards at any moment, for any reason. Walking around with an undetonated bomb in your chest had a peculiar effect on your general outlook—gives life here a certain transitory quality, you might say.

Nagma didn't seem to care about that now, and it didn't look like he was one for idle small talk. So I gave up trying to make conversation and sighed. "What are you looking for?" I asked.

"You know what Anzati snot garlic is?" he asked.

"What, you mean the cooking ingredient?" I frowned.

"I think I had it in shaak pot roast once. Why?"

"I need an entire bulb of it. As soon as possible." He laced his fingers together and cracked his knuckles, a nervous habit. "How long will it take to smuggle in?"

"If you don't mind my asking," I said, "what's the big emergency? Are the Bone Kings planning a banquet I'm not aware of?"

"It's this place," Nagma said. "You know that as well as I do, Zero. Everything's an emergency."

I didn't reply, but I understood what he meant. We were all well aware that the Hive's algorithm could select any of us at any time. When the prison walls began to pivot and twist and reassemble themselves around us, one cell would

be paired with another, the occupants forced into a match where there could only be one survivor. In short, you never knew when your number was up.

"What do you need it for?" I asked.

"That's personal," Nagma said, but when he looked back up at

me, I could see that his whole body was trembling, the sweat-stains already soaking through his uniform, forming darkened half-moons beneath his arms.

Nerves, I thought.

I was wrong.

Nagma's snot garlic arrived a week later, smuggled in alongside a shipment of replacement droid components and medical supplies. By the time he came to pick it up, I realized that whatever was ailing him had gotten significantly worse.

Since the last time we'd spoken, his eyes had sunken into his head, giving his entire face a gaunt and haunted look, like a skull with the thinnest veneer of skin stretched across it. He somehow seemed to have become even more skeletal, except for his belly, which bulged grotesquely outward from his uniform. He held it when he sat down, clutching it and wincing in pain as if he were in the throes of some terrible misbegotten pregnancy.

"You all right?" I asked.

He shook his head, waving the question away. His voice was thin, reedy with pain. "Did you get it?"

"Yes, and I'm happy to be rid of it," I said, reaching down

EVERY CONVICT IN COG HIVE SEVEN REPRESENTED THE SCUM OF THE GALAXY—MURDERERS, MERCENARIES, AND PSYCHOPATHS OF EVERY STRIPE AND SPECIES.

into the hidden pocket I'd stitched inside my pantleg, and passing the bulb of snot garlic under the table. "This stuff reeks worse than a wet tauntaun."

"Here." Grabbing the garlic, he thrust a wad of crumpled credits notes into my palm, already rising up to leave. He didn't make it far. Three meters away, there was a sharp scream of pain, and we both looked up as one of the other cons—a sociopathic Rodian named Skagway—went flying across the next table over, blood geysering from the hole in his throat, splashing down to soak the front of his uniform. The moment that he hit the floor, Bone Kings, three of them, leapt on top of him, and I saw Nagma's expression sicken.

"What are they doing?" he asked.

"Deboning," I said, and reached for his arm. "Best not to watch." The one in charge was a mass murderer named Vas Nailhead, known especially for making weapons from the sharpened femurs and ribs of his kills.

For an instant Nagma stood paralyzed, unable to look away. After a second, Vas straightened up, his hands slathered with fresh blood. "What are you looking at, maggot?" Before Nagma could answer, Nailhead's hand shot out and grabbed him, yanking him forward so fast that his long skinny legs tangled underneath him. I saw Nagma's jaw drop open, hopeless, eyes goggling in panic.

"Easy, Vas." I held up one hand. "He's nothing to you."

Nailhead glared at me and his lips wrinkled back. "Zero? You're standing up for this puke?"

"He's a customer," I said with a shrug. "I have to protect my income stream, don't I?"

We locked eyes for a second, and I lifted my right foot off the ground. My prison-issue boots were lined with plexisteel, and Nailhead knew what it would do if I decided to put one through his face.

He let out a snarl and released his grip and shoved Nagma back to his spot at the table. For a moment neither of us spoke. After what felt like a very long time, Nagma gazed up at me.

"You stood up for me."

"It's nothing," I said. "Forget it."

He shook his head.

"I won't."

I sighed. "Listen. Everything here is a test. It's just a matter of choosing your moment, and not hesitating when it comes."

Nagma let out a low, slow breath, and his bony shoulders trembled. The cloyingly sweet smell that I'd initially attributed to fear had become irrefutably stronger, and I realized now what it was—some form of fever, an illness that was only getting worse. In his sickened state, the attack seemed to have drained whatever strength he'd had, leaving him visibly depleted.

"You asked for my story." Something passed over his face, a grim tightness at the corners of the lips that could've been a smile—except the emotional component had been stripped away from it, leaving a kind of unplugged hopelessness. "I'm from Monsolar. Little backwater dirt-cod tucked into the Alzoc system."

"Never heard of it."

"You're not missing much." He shook his head. "It's a pit. Heavy canopy, primitive tribes, most of them at war with each other... not many get out."

NAGMA LET OUT A LOW, SLOW BREATH, AND HIS BONY SHOULDER TREMBLED. THE CLOYINGLY SWEET SMELL I'D INITIALLY ATTRIBUTED TO FEAR HAD BECOME IRREFUTABLY STRONGER....



"You did."

He gave me a wry look. "Only to end up here," he said. "It's my own fault. I got caught with a stolen load of thermal detonators in a spaceport on Urdur. That's an automatic life sentence in any system."

"Tough luck," I said.

Nagma shrugged. "The gangster who hired me said he could help me. I was desperate. I guess I still am."

I looked at him again, saw the sweat pouring down his

emaciated face, the bulging stomach. "You're sick," I said.

"It's worse than that," he said. "It's the Worm."

"The what?"

He stared down at his trembling hands for a moment, as if the rest of the story might magically materialize in front of him, preventing him from having to tell it out loud. When it didn't, he drew a deep breath and pressed on. "Ever hear of the Syrox? The Wolf Worm of Monsolar?"

"Can't say that I have."

"It's an alpha species, native to my home planet." He let the breath out slowly. "An ectomorphic life-form, evolved in some way but not in others—a highly efficient, brainless predator. Feeds on blood. Imagine a blind river parasite half the size of



this mess hall, with a mouth ringed in rows of teeth, and you'll start to get the idea."

I said nothing, just waited for him to continue.

"Back home," Nagma said, "most of the local tribes either worshiped it, feared it, or both. Over the generations, we built our culture around it, our stories and myths and rites of passage." He gave me a queasy smile, and glanced down at the swollen bulge of his belly. "Every season the Syrox lays its eggs in the streams of the river. They start out small—microscopic. That's why we never drink unfiltered water on Monsolar. But say a kid gets lost in the jungle... and gets thirsty enough..."

I stared at him, seeing how it could have happened. Nagma nodded again and gave me that terrible, meaningless smile.

"Incubation time is slow. It can remain in the gut of the host for years, feeding and growing stronger." He looked down at his swollen stomach, and a terrible hopelessness flashed over his face. "But eventually it always finds its way out."

"And the gangster who hired you to transport those detonators—"

Nagma nodded again. "He said he could get it removed for me, that he could set me up with tricky surgery in a clinic back in the Core Worlds. But the authorities caught up with me first. Not that it matters now." He patted his stomach tenderly. "It's getting larger each day. I can feel it getting bigger, pushing my organs aside. Sometimes at night..." He swallowed hard. "I can feel it moving around inside me. And I have to get it out."

He took the bulb of garlic out of his pocket and placed it on

the table, and for a moment we both looked at it. "So what's with the garlic?"

"Back on Monsolar, we had an old folk remedy for those who've been infected. Go to sleep with a bulb of snot garlic on your pillow. They say the Syrox is attracted to the smell. It comes crawling out on its own."

"Respectfully..." I stood up, reached across the table and tapped my finger over his chest. "You've got a bomb implanted in your heart. And at any given moment you could be matched against another inmate who will in all likelihood kill you." I waved my hand, gesturing to the inmates lined up at the mess hall tables. "Any one of us could be dead tomorrow. Why do you care so much about getting this parasite out of your system?"

Nagma gazed back at me, and for just a second I thought I saw a flash of the young tribesman that he'd once been, steadfast and unafraid with his whole future ahead of him. Before the Worm had gotten into him. Before he'd been brought here. When he spoke again his voice was low and calm, but there was deep steel in it.

"My tribe is founded in the traditions of justice and honor," he said. "I can accept my sentence, because I chose to smuggle those detonators. It was my mistake, and I'll pay for it—with my life, if I have to." His eyes narrowed, growing cold. "But I want to go my way, Zero. Clean." He grimaced. "Without this godforsaken thing crawling around inside me."

He opened his mouth to say something else, and the clarion bell went off. In the Hive, that meant only one thing. The matching was about to begin. When the alarm sounded, you had five minutes till lockdown, and I knew what Nagma was thinking—what would happen if the algorithm, in its infinite wisdom, selected him, and when the countless moving parts of Cog Hive Seven finished their reconfiguration, the wall of his cell opened up to expose the inmate that would almost certainly be the death of him.

When I looked up again, he was gone.

Waleed Nagma wasn't matched to fight that day, or the day after that, or the weeks to come. Every so often, I saw him lingering around the mess hall or the central pavilion where the halls of the Hive came together like spokes in a great wheel, where the cons milled around listlessly throughout the day, serving out their sentences and waiting to get matched. He never approached me or tried to make contact, but I could tell from looking at him that the thing he'd told me about—the Syrox, the thing he called the Wolf Worm—was still incubating inside him. His belly looked enormous, as if it were about to burst.

Then one day I was heading back to my cell for the night when a guard named Voystock came up behind me and tapped me on the shoulder.

"Zero?"

I stopped and looked around, and he waved me forward,

back down the way I'd come. "Got a message for you. This way."

"Where are we going?"

He didn't answer, and I didn't really expect him to. We weren't heading for any of the cell blocks, but lower, following a narrow stairway to the abandoned manufacturing area that the cons called Nightside. Rounding a corner, Voystock swung open the broken hatchway and nodded me into the flat, darkened space beyond it. After a moment of standing there, letting my eyes adjust, I sensed something curled in the corner, fifteen meters away, moving in the shadows.

"Zero," a voice croaked.

The voice froze me. It was a raspy, almost incoherent whisper, so heavy with pain that I almost couldn't recognize it. "Nagma?"

"Don't come any closer," the voice said, and there was something clotted about the words, as if they were forcing their way through a thick obstruction. "It's coming up now. It's almost—"

The words broke off. I tried to step back, but my feet felt nailed to the spot. When the thing in the corner shifted slightly into a rectangle of light from the hatchway, I saw what I hadn't been able to make out before—or as much of it as I could stand to see, anyway. Enough to last me for the rest of my life.

Wateed Nagma was sprawled on his side, curled into a desperate, fetal clutch, with his cheek pressed against the durasteel floor. He was convulsing wildly. His eyes were pinched shut, but his mouth was stretched open so wide that I thought his jaw had dislocated.

Something was coming out of his mouth.

At first I thought it was his tongue. Except it was white. And huge. Ropey. And then I saw it plainly, slithering into view, slow and pale and thick and I knew what it was.

The Worm.

Its slimy, pale length was emerging from between Nagma's lips with a hideous laziness, slithering forward as its broad flat head qusted after the withered bulb of snot garlic he'd placed in front of it.

I couldn't breathe. Could only watch in something that wasn't just revulsion, but went beyond that.

As the Worm came. And came. And just kept on coming.

At the sight of it—the sheer repulsive length of the thing, several meters long at least—I heard myself curse aloud. I felt my own stomach give an uneasy lurch, and heard Nagma scream.

By now the worm had pulled itself completely out, whipped its tail free, then reared back, twisting its blind head in my direction, as if only now realizing that I was here. For an instant, time seemed to freeze. As the Syrox faced me, the entire front of its head peeled back to reveal a perfectly round mouth, perhaps half a meter across, lined with rows of inward facing

WHEN THE THING IN THE CORNER SHIFTED SLIGHTLY INTO A RECTANGLE OF LIGHT FROM THE HATCHWAY, I SAW WHAT I HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO MAKE OUT BEFORE.

teeth. It lunged.

"Kill it!" Nagma shrieked. "Kill it, Zero!"

He said something else, but I didn't hear it. Springing forward, I lifted my foot, encased in the heavy prison-issue boot, and brought my heel down as hard as I could on the worm's head. There was a horrible scrunching squelch as whatever was inside of it collapsed and

burst open. And I watched as its narrow hooked teeth scattered sideways in a skittering profusion across the floor.

The body of the thing fell still, deflated.

For what felt like a long time, neither of us moved. Then Nagma reached up and wiped his mouth and spat, and with great effort, started to stand up. I reached out and helped him rise to his full height. He nodded his thanks.

"I suppose... this means..." He hitched in a breath and glanced over where the bulb of snot garlic still sat, "...I owe you again...?"

"Forget it." I wiped off the bottom of my boot, scraping it





against a pile of discarded droid parts that had been left in the corner. "Just so I don't ever have to look at that thing again."

Nagma stood there in the corner for a long time without speaking. Looking at the way he stood now, with his back and shoulders held straight, I thought I understood something about him now, the connection that I hadn't grasped earlier. And I saw why he'd asked for the snot garlic, and why it was so important to him. Why, in the midst of this living hell, it *did* matter.

True, we inmates of Cog Hive Seven walked around with bombs implanted in our chests, and we couldn't know when the algorithm might send us into a bout...but there were still some things that we had control over. A part of us that the guards and the warden and the fights couldn't touch. And I guess I knew what the word for that was. It was a strange word to use in a place like this, but it fit.

Freedom.

"Zero?"

I looked at him. "Yeah?"

"I can't help but wonder..." He stared at me, hollow-eyed and haunted. "What if I didn't get it all? What if part of it broke off inside of me? What if...?"

He didn't finish, and in the end, he just went back to his cell, alone.

All of this was a long time ago, several years at least, although time has a funny way of passing differently here. Sometimes when I'm lying in my cell waiting to go to sleep, I wonder why Nagma sent for me that night. It might've been because I was the only one he'd told about the Worm, or maybe I was the closest he had to a friend in this place... or he'd just wanted to make sure that someone was around to finish the thing off. Someone who wouldn't hesitate in the moment when it mattered the most.

Two weeks after those hideous few minutes in Nightside, his number was matched by the algorithm, and he went up against another inmate. It wasn't much of a fight. Nagma's opponent killed him within just a few minutes. I never had another opportunity to find out what happened with the Worm, whether there was any left inside.

But at night sometimes, when the hours draw out and I can't find sleep, I do wonder.

I think about the holovid of Nagma's Match—I've watched it several times—and what happened at the very end, when his slack face hit the floor. I think about the thing that might not have been his tongue that came out from the corner of his slackened lips. The detail and resolution on the holovid isn't great, and no matter how many times I watch it, I can't quite be sure.

But it makes me think about that thing, the Worm that came all the way from Monsolar inside of his belly, and how it got here and discovered something that the rest of us only think about in the abstract, something that under the circumstances might not have been good for the rest of us at all.

And sometimes I think about the last comment that he made to me, before going back to his cell that night. Not a statement but a question, one that I couldn't answer—not that he seemed to expect one.

I just wonder... What if I didn't get it all? What if part of it broke off inside of me?

And that's when I think about the Worm inside the dark recesses of the Hive, the ductwork and the walls, moving in silence and growing fat on the blood of the cons that die in the fights.

What it might find here, in the dark.

And I think about that word again. That terrible word.

Freedom. 🐛

EXPANDED

Darth Maul Lockdown will be available from January 21, 2014

See more of John VanFleet's art at www.johnvanfleet.com

UNIVERSE

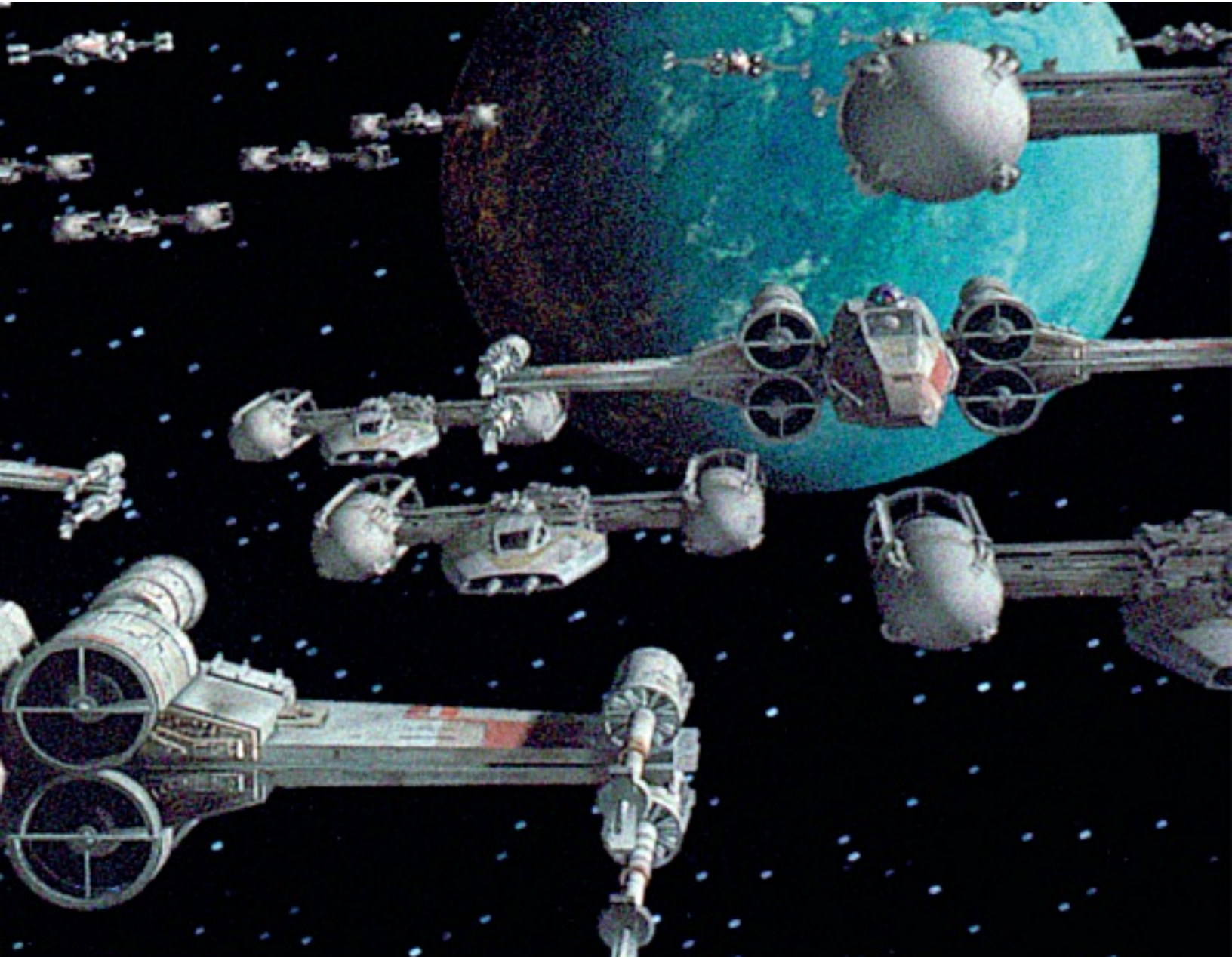




Main image: The stunning digital shot depicting the X-wing approach on the Death Star from *A New Hope*. Below, right: Edwin Catmull. Computer revolutionary!

DAWN OF A DIGITAL AGE!

EDWIN CATMULL, PIXAR PIONEER AND HEAD OF LUCASFILM'S DIGITAL PROJECTS, ON THE START OF THE COMPUTER REVOLUTION!



Former ILM manager (1980-1985) Thomas G. Smith interviewed Edwin Catmull in 1985 for his book, *Industrial Light & Magic, The Art of Special Effects* (1986) published by Del Rey/Ballantine.

While portions of the interview were found in the book, here, for the first time, is the full interview. Edwin Catmull became vice president of the computer graphics division at Lucasfilm in 1979. He helped develop technology to combine multiple images in a convincing way and generate artificial ones. In 1986, Lucas sold the computer division to Steve Jobs, who founded Pixar Animation Studios. Catmull became chief technical officer at Pixar and spearheaded development of the system used to create such films such as *Toy Story* and *Finding Nemo*. In 2006, the Walt Disney Company purchased Pixar from Jobs for 7.4 billion dollars. Catmull is now President of Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios.

This 1985 interview illustrates the enormous strides made in computer technology since then and the progress

in computer generated images (CGI), which have become an essential part of the art of motion pictures.

Smith: How did you get into computer graphics?

Catmull: When I was a student at the University of Utah, I decided this is the course I wanted to take. I studied physics and computer science at Utah. After I graduated, I worked as a computer programmer at the Boeing Company for a short time. Then I went to the New York Institute of Technology, where someone was willing to invest a lot of money in the computer graphic field, which was in its infancy. While I was there I wondered, When will we be getting motion picture quality images? I thought it was about 10 years away. Wanting to become part of the motion



picture revolution, I came to work for George Lucas in 1979. George shared my faith that the revolution was on its way and was willing to invest a substantial amount in research and development.

Smith: What role do you see for computer images for film in the year 2000?

Catmull: I haven't thought a lot about what we will be doing in 15 years. The year

2000 is a scary number. It has a lot to do with the availability of computer hardware. The way technology develops is you get people out on the fringes who bring things to market and the filtering out occurs as costs go down.

Our Pixar computer is a \$100,000 computer, so it is expensive. ILM could use it for bluescreen matting, or it could also be used for medical imagery. But

as good as it is, in three or four years, we will have a machine that costs a quarter of that and will be better. There is this continual decrease in cost driven by the fact that people can take the technology and make better chips. The computer revolution is actually a printing revolution. All those computer chips are printed in sand. So what's in these machines? Sand with copper wires connecting the parts together.

Smith: How do you create the computer chip?

Catmull: We use a camera to photograph what we want on silicon and reduce it. If you can make things small and can figure out how to get them down to these little silicon chips, then ultimately a micro-processing chip is going to cost two bucks to manufacture. There is hardly anything there. They'll still have to charge more than two bucks. Most of the expense is paying for the people who thought of what goes on the chips. In most computers, the processor itself is the cheap part.

Smith: What kind of image quality can you get from a computer?

Catmull: For two million dollars today, you can buy a flight simulator from Evans and Southerland. It will display 7,000 polygons in real time.

Aircraft simulators are used a lot in the military. In fact, you can get a license from the Federal Aviation Administration to fly a Boeing 767 without ever having flown one. So if we can do that now, in 15 years we'll be able to create a synthetic environment. Theme parks will have them. We can make entire movies using CGI.

Smith: What will it mean for motion picture visual effects?

Catmull: ILM is trying computer graphics this year [1985]. They've hired two guys and we're providing access to technology we've developed. We have a scene that came to us from a film Steven Spielberg's producing called *Young Sherlock Holmes* (1985). Most of it is fairly conventional, but there are some scenes that are very hard for ILM to do, which may be possible for us. We are extending the visual repertoire with our Pixar computer.

In this story, a stained glass window of a knight pops out of the frame and walks toward a priest. They want the stained glass window to walk and fight with a sword.

It is all part of the revolution of making



films with computers. There are a lot of people who can't see that far yet, but it is coming. There have been some mistakes along the way. Some things turned out to be harder than we expected. And of course there were a lot of surprises. But we were always headed to the goal of doing full-length feature films.

I think that in five years we will make a completely synthetic movie.

"IN 15 YEARS WE CAN MAKE ENTIRE MOVIES USING CGI."—EDWIN CATMULL IN 1985

Smith: Is there some way you can help Lucasfilm's 2D animation for children's TV, simple Saturday morning type animation?

Catmull: Not right now. That kind of 2D animation is so cheap. I would like to think we could make a fully dimensional animated film for under \$15 million. Of course, \$10 million would be really nice. But our first film is likely to cost \$15 million. There will be a lot of pressure to drive the price down. It is just a matter of how fast the animators can put out the material.

The problem with animated films is

they always run out of money at the end. *The Secret of NIMH* (1982) looked like a film that ran out of money. They left out the end of the story—that is true of a lot of animated films.

Right now it is the cost of the machines, but I think the time will come when labor costs will dominate. It costs about \$300,000 a month just for the computer hardware. The labor costs will double that number. So you hope they really work fast. The rent is high.

Smith: Can you describe what the Pixar computer is?

Catmull: The Pixar has two main components. One is a very large memory. Because of this, it can go up to 4,000 x 8,000

(pixel) resolution. This exceeds the needs for film. The second part is the processor. The processor is capable of executing 40 million instructions every second. This is what makes it unique. A general-purpose computer will execute a million per second. So the Pixar is 40 times faster. It is also designed to work with images. And the net result is that it is 200 times faster than a general-purpose computer for images.

Smith: So how can ILM use it?

Catmull: Suppose you want to extract a character's image from a bluescreen background. If you're doing a bluescreen



shot with two elements, you've got 4 million dots there and it requires a lot of calculations. It's a lot of arithmetic. It takes four seconds to calculate the instructions for one frame.

Smith: So in theory you could have Harrison Ford in front of a bluescreen, scan it, store it, and then scan a matte painting and store that. Then the two are put together in the computer, you hit a button and the two are recorded onto film. The director could even have a look at the image before it is printed onto film.

Catmull: Yes, and that is a lot of data. When we first bought the equipment, the big storage disk we bought was 300 megabytes. And that cost us around \$15,000. Now you can get a 600 megabyte disk for \$7,000. [These 1985 prices are hundreds of times higher than prices for similar size data storage devices in 2013.]

We are currently the only ones who have a movie laser scanner. We'll attempt to use this scanner on Steven Spielberg's *Young Sherlock Holmes*. We can't fail on it, so we have to move carefully.

We are also working on a Pixar III computer. It is very different from the

Pixar computer we now have. To give you an idea of the complexity, the flight simulator that I mentioned earlier displays 7,000 polygons in real time. The Pixar III is designed for around 80 million polygons. This is the kind of complexity that you need for practical film work.

Smith: What is the possibility of projecting computer images right on to the theater screen, avoiding film altogether?

Catmull: The Japanese are working on this. They have built some 1,100 line monitors and they look quite good. The projectors they have are up to 800 lines. If you were to compare that to projected movie film you could see a difference. I think most of the difference is in the dynamic range [dynamic range concerns the steps from black to white; the ratio between the maximum and minimum intensities on the screen.] Normal 35mm film has a range of 300 to 1. TV is around 25 to 1. It shows up with the blacks and the detail you can see in the dark and bright areas of the picture. Most video projectors today have a dynamic range of about 10 to 1. There is no detail in very dark or very bright areas of the image. And to answer your question, yes, we

will be able to project directly from a computer and George Lucas would like that! 🍌

In 1986, *Young Sherlock Holmes*, with scenes from the Pixar computer, was nominated for an Oscar for Best Visual Effects. In 1993, Edwin Catmull was awarded his first Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences technical Award, "For the development of photorealistic RenderMan software which produces images used in motion pictures from 3D computer descriptions of shape and appearance." Again in 1996, he received an Academy Scientific and Technical Award "For pioneering inventions in Digital Image Compositing." In 2001, he received an Oscar "For significant advancements to the field of motion picture rendering as exemplified in Pixar's RenderMan." He is recognized as one of the leading pioneers in the computer graphics that have transformed motion pictures in the last 30 years. And the Pixar group all started at Lucasfilm and ILM back in the day.

Above, left: The CG stainless steel knight from *Young Sherlock Holmes* (1985) that represented a major step forward!

Top, right: Catmull at work!

Top, right (from left): Computer graphics department members: Edwin Catmull, Alvy Ray Smith, Loren Carpenter

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ARRIVAL ON CORUSCANT

WORDS: NEIL EDWARDS

SCRIPT (1999)

EXT. CORUSCANT—CITYSCAPE—NABOO SPACECRAFT—DAY (FX)

The spacecraft flies over the endless cityscape of Coruscant, the capital of the galaxy.

INT. NABOO SPACECRAFT—COCKPIT

ANAKIN looks out of the cockpit window in awe.

RIC OLIÉ: Coruscant... the capital of the Republic... the entire planet is one big city.

ANAKIN: Wow! It's so huge!

EXT. NABOO SPACECRAFT—DAY (FX)

The ship flies through the cityscape of Coruscant.

EXT. CORUSCANT—SENATE LANDING PLATFORM—DAY

Supreme Chancellor VALORUM, SEVERAL GUARDS, and SENATOR PALPATINE stand on a landing platform.

The sleek Naboo spacecraft lands on the platform high above the street level of the galactic capital. The ramp lowers. OBI-WAN, QUI-GON, JAR JAR, and ANAKIN descend the ramp first and bow before PALPATINE and VALORUM.

CAPTAIN PANAKA, TWO GUARDS, QUEEN AMIDALA, the PADMÉ, RABÉ, EIRTAÉ, and MORE GUARDS descend the ramp. QUEEN AMIDALA stops before the group.

ANAKIN and JAR JAR stand to one side, looking at the huge city. PADMÉ smiles at ANAKIN. PALPATINE bows before the Queen.

PALPATINE: It is a great gift to see you alive, Your Majesty. May I present Supreme Chancellor Valorum.

VALORUM: Welcome, Your Highness. It is an honor to finally meet you in person. I must relay to you how distressed everyone is over the current situation. I've called for a special session of the Senate to hear your position.

AMIDALA: I am grateful for your concern, Chancellor.

PALPATINE starts to lead QUEEN AMIDALA and her RETINUE off the platform toward a waiting air taxi.

PALPATINE: There is a question of procedure, but I feel confident we can overcome it...

WHAT THEY SAID

"It was like taking Manhattan and scaling it way, way up. All of these buildings are a mile to two-mile high skyscrapers. We never see the floor because this is a city of such large buildings. Each of them is several blocks wide at the base. This was the overall view, with flying traffic going throughout the city—a very 3D world." Doug Chiang, *Star Wars Insider* #34

ESSENTIAL TRIVIA

Coruscant was first named as such in Timothy Zahn's 1991 novel *Heir to the Empire*. Before this, the planet had been referred to as Imperial Center, notably in the West End Games RPG Sourcebooks. Originally, there were plans to show the capital in *Return of the Jedi*, then named Had Abaddon, but the creation of a planet-wide city was deemed impossible with the special effects of the time.

WHY IT'S A CLASSIC

From Amidala's arrival on Coruscant, it soon became clear that in the prequels, we would begin to see things we'd only heard about or imagined before. Chief among those being the center of the galaxy—Coruscant. Looking back at the original trilogy, it's notable just how much of the action takes place on Outer Rim worlds and largely uninhabited planets or moons—Tatooine, Yavin 4, Hoth, Bespin, Dagobah, Endor—places a long way from the center of government, both physically and lawfully. It's in these places that the rebellion and scoundrels like Han, Lando, and the bounty hunters must survive. In the prequels, however, much of the action takes place on the capital of Coruscant.

We also see in this scene how different things were before the Empire. In *A New Hope*, one of the first acts we hear about is the dissolution of the Imperial Senate, but now we witness the Senate in all its maddeningly bureaucratic glory. Here, we're introduced to Chancellor Valorum, who in his gentlemanly courtliness is a world away from the Emperor and his sinister aides. More than anything, the scene shows us that this is a different, more elegant age—Amidala's elaborate hairstyles and dresses contrast with her daughter Leia's more practical gowns, and her sleek silvery yacht is entirely different from the threatening uniformity of the Empire's fleet and the make-do-and-mend Rebellion Alliance ships. As we see the elegant yacht land on the glittering cityscape, there is already a sense of foreboding—we know that this elegant age will not last. 🗓️

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VONG INVADE

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"THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BLASTER AT YOUR SIDE, KID."



BOOKS

THE LATEST AND GREATEST STAR WARS TALES HEADING YOUR WAY! WORDS: DAN WALLACE

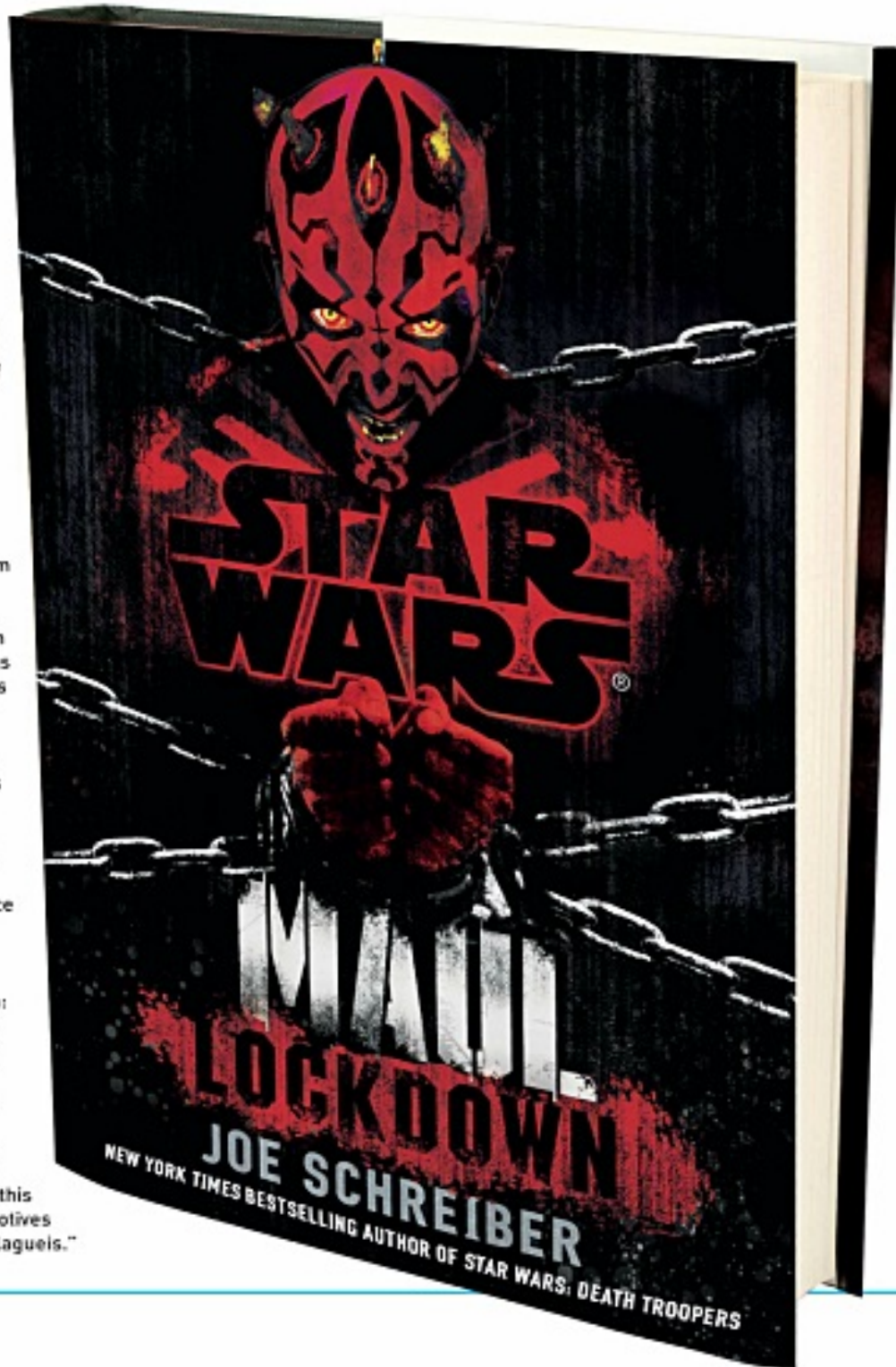
MAUL BEHIND BARS

What Happens When
You Cage a Sith Lord?
Find Out in *Darth
Maul: Lockdown*

In *The Phantom Menace* and *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, Darth Maul has demonstrated his skill as an unstoppable killing machine. But in Joe Schreiber's new novel, *Darth Maul: Lockdown*, the devilish Sith apprentice finds himself dropped into the worst place in the galaxy. The prison planet Cog Hive Seven is home to sadistic guards and brutal inmates. In this kill or be killed environment, can even someone as dangerous as Maul make it out alive?

"Maul has been sent to locate Iram Radique, a reclusive and incredibly powerful galactic arms dealer who allegedly runs his empire from within the walls of Cog Hive Seven," explains Schreiber. "Radique is a ghost. Nobody's seen him in person in years. But it's Maul's job to track him down, penetrating the layers of subterfuge and resistance surrounding the arms dealer's operation, and arrange for the purchase of a very particular weapon—if he can survive that long. It's a challenge, because Maul has been instructed not to reveal his Force abilities under any circumstances. So he has to fend for himself using physical strength and training."

The person behind Maul's Mission: Impossible is Darth Sidious, Senator Palpatine's Sith alter ego. *Lockdown* is set in 33 BBY, or slightly before the events of *Star Wars* Episode I: *The Phantom Menace*, when Sidious is still the dark side apprentice of Darth Plagueis. Adds Schreiber, "As to why Sidious has dispatched Maul to make this arrangement, let's just say his true motives are best concealed, especially from Plagueis."



Sidious has an agenda in *Lockdown*, and his master Darth Plagueis is aware of only part of it. "Seeds are being planted here for some of the biggest upsets and betrayals in their relationship," says Schreiber. "It's clear that Sidious knows the stakes when it comes to plotting against his master. They're both coldly intelligent and driven by a lethal mixture of arrogance and ambition, and they're both aware of each other's unblinking scrutiny when it comes to the possibility of betrayal as the stakes are raised, met, and raised again. Imagine an ongoing chess match between two grandmasters and you'll start to get the idea. Beneath the veneer of civility and restraint, everything is a sort of test, and no one is to be entirely trusted."

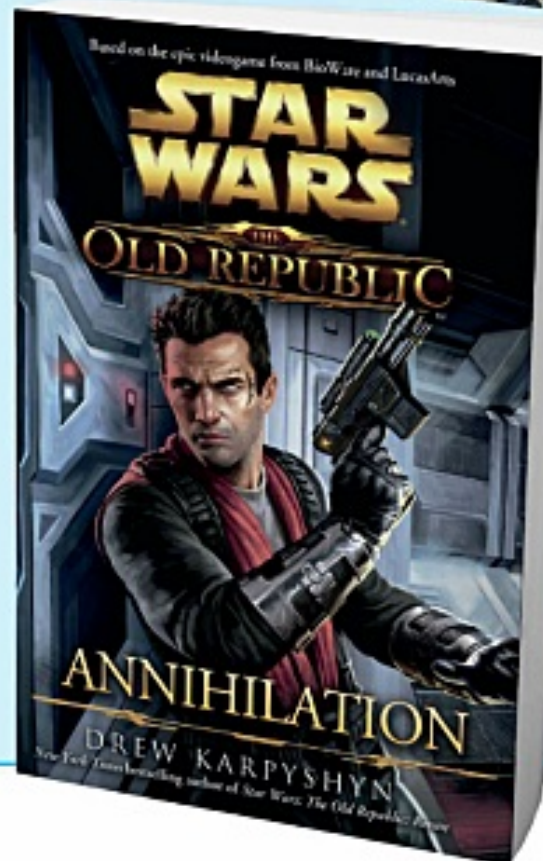
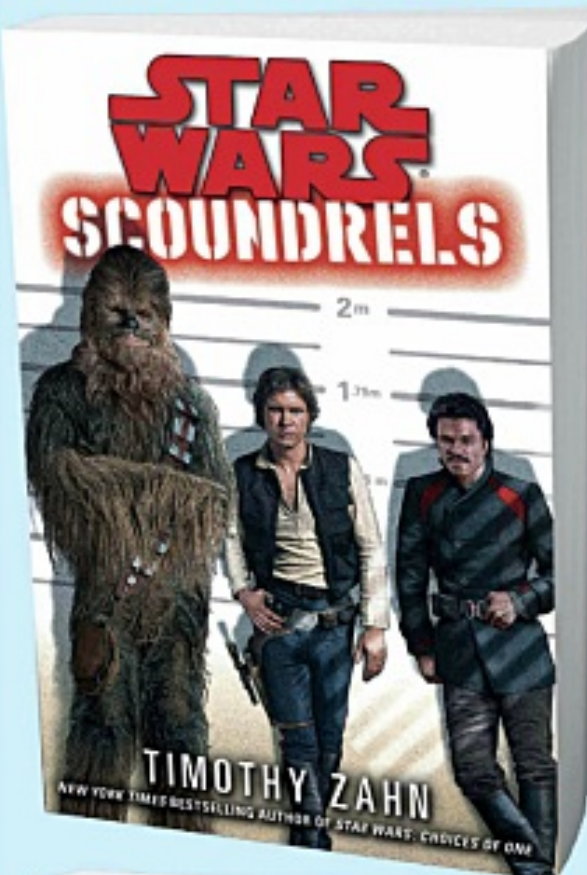
The nightmarish prison environment in *Lockdown* is practically a character in its own right. Once he lands behind bars, Darth Maul faces threats including a bloodthirsty warden, a cannibal gang, and illegal gladiatorial death matches between the inmates.

"Cog Hive Seven is a fully articulated prison planet, which means that its very walls, floors, and infrastructure can be rearranged and shifted around so that any two inmates can be pitted against one another in a gladiatorial battle to the death," says Schreiber. "The inmate populace is the worst of the worst. Murderers, mercenaries, and pit fighters. There are gangs within these walls, as well as all kinds of semi-sentient and non-sentient creatures locked up in the lower levels that fans will definitely recognize from the movies and novels. And buried deep within its core is a thing so hideous and insatiable that some of the inmates and guards think that it doesn't exist. But it does."

Fans will also want to keep their eyes open for familiar cameos. Jabba the Hutt plays a key role, for example, and gamers who played 2002's *Bounty Hunter* will spot Count Dooku's ex-student Komari Vosa and her distinctive lightsabers.

Schreiber, who lent his gritty, horror-inspired writing style to the previous *Star Wars* novels *Death Troopers* and *Red Harvest*, is eager to get another crack at the galaxy far, far away. "It's great to be back," he says. "I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be working with Lucasfilm and Del Rey on another *Star Wars* novel. *Darth Maul: Lockdown* isn't a horror novel like the last two *Star Wars* books, but we definitely conceived of it as an intense, amped-up thrill ride of a book. It's lean and mean."

HAVE A VERY FORCEFUL HOLIDAY



Two Major *Star Wars* Novels Are Now in Paperback

For the discerning *Star Wars* fan who wants some reading material to curl up with in front of the fireplace over the long holiday break, two major releases are now available in paperback editions: Drew Karpyshyn's *The Old Republic: Annihilation* and Timothy Zahn's *Scoundrels*.

Annihilation (available in paperback from October 29) is set thousands of years ago during the time of the online game *The Old Republic*. It follows Republic agent Theron Shan and his Twi'lek partner Teff'ith on a mission to thwart a Sith Empire counterattack against the Republic.

Scoundrels (available in paperback from November 26) finds Han Solo still basking in the glory of helping to take down the Empire's most feared superweapon, the Death Star. But the reward money he received from the Rebel Alliance has already evaporated, and old debts have resurfaced to make him a wanted man once more. If Han doesn't pay off Jabba the Hutt, his days are numbered, and so he jumps at a mysterious stranger's offer for a chance at unimaginable riches. When Han and Chewie assemble a team of oddballs, it's time to stage the greatest heist the galaxy has ever seen!



COMICS //

THE VERY BEST *STAR WARS* COMIC BOOKS HEADED YOUR WAY! WORDS: DAN WALLACE

THE FIRST BATTLE

The Early Jedi Face a Trial by Fire in *Dawn of the Jedi: Force War*

The *Dawn of the Jedi* comics series dared to go where no Jedi had gone before when it debuted in 2012. Set more than 25,000 years before the movies, it cast the prototypical Force warriors (here called the Je'daii) as the protectors of the Tython planetary system. Lacking hyperspace technology, the Je'daii were shocked to learn of an extra-planetary threat, the alien Rakata. Now, in the new story arc *Force War*, the Rakata demonstrate why they're the galaxy's dominant species in this era. "The Rakata have a huge technological advantage over the people of the Tython system," explains artist Jan Duursema. "They have tech to cloak their ships. The Tythans have nothing with the speed or hyperspace capability of the Rakatan fleet."

The Je'daii of Tython do have some assets, including the "Force Hound" known as Xesh who is on the run from his cruel Rakatan masters. "The Rakata use Force-sensitive slaves and torture them so they're in constant pain, generating the dark side which their technology can siphon," says writer John Ostrander. "The best hope the Je'daii have are the forcesabers which they have stolen from the Rakata, via Xesh. But to use them, the Je'daii will have to forsake the Balance and go dark."

This act puts the Je'daii in spiritual peril, and Xesh isn't their only questionable friend. The mad Je'daii Daegen Lok has signed up to battle the invading Rakatan armies, a situation that's guaranteed to generate sparks. "Lok thinks of Xesh as a comrade, as his little brother," says Ostrander. "He doesn't think Xesh is as powerful as he is. He is sadly mistaken." The valor of every warrior in the Tython system is needed if its people are to



Interior art: Jan Duursema

survive. Ostrander describes the wartime effects on the settled worlds as "vicious and grim" as the Rakatan war machine steamrolls everything in its path. "The Je'daii have fought wars before, but nothing like this," he says. "The Rakata are powerful Force users, relying on the dark side, and they are as powerful, or more, than the Je'daii."

Adds Duursema, "They plan to decimate the Tython system and use the Je'daii as slaves. We follow the battle to Shikaakwa and other planets, including Ska Gora—a particularly painful world,

as the entire system has tried to keep it in a wild and primordial state."

As expected from this clash of civilizations, the *Force War* arc promises to permanently shake up the *Dawn of the Jedi* setting. "The Rakatan invasion will change everything, including how the Je'daii are viewed by the rest of the Tython system," says Duursema. "This story has a lot of reveals about the characters and what it means to be a Je'daii, and also hints about the Je'daii Order will fracture as the *Force Wars* continue."



WARRIOR IDOL

Vader Inspires an Old Soldier in *Darth Vader and the Cry of Shadows*



Left: Interior art by Gabriel Guzman. Right: Cover art by Ariel Olivetti

There's no doubt that Darth Vader is a great fighter, but he's also a leader to the Imperial soldiers under his command. The nature of that leadership—and what happens when loyalties are called into question—is the subject of *Darth Vader and the Cry of Shadows*, a new five-issue series by writer Tim Siedell and artist Gabriel Guzman.

Siedell, who is coming to *Cry of Shadows* following the success of his mini-series *Darth Vader and the Ninth Assassin*, introduces a new POV character in the form of an embittered clone trooper bearing a grudge toward the Jedi who abandoned him during the Clone Wars. "This is a clone who has had a lot of time to think, to build resentment, and to be alone with his anger," says Siedell. "While his heart is changing, so too is the galaxy. It's a confusing time for him and most everyone else, really."

Even though the Clone Wars are over, this clone trooper survivor was bred for

war. And when he hears whispers about Darth Vader, he sees in this mythic figure every quality the Jedi lacked, such as decisiveness and leadership. "Like a lot of us, he wants to be led," says Siedell. "He wants to believe in someone, or something."

Issue #1, on sale December 18, is set only a few months after *Revenge of the Sith*. Vader is still growing accustomed to his life-supporting armor and his role as the Emperor's enforcer. "He's not the calm, cool Vader we know," says Siedell. "He's more impulsive and cocksure, and maybe—after some of his stunning early successes—he's at the peak of his Anakin arrogance. We'll see him make some choices that will help define who he is and what he becomes."

Though this series is unconnected to Siedell's earlier Vader story, Siedell sees both *Cry of Shadows* and *Ninth Assassin* as important glimpses into Darth Vader's early development. "Ninth Assassin sets

up this story nicely because that was more of an adventure story where we got to see Vader in action. In *Cry of Shadows* the legend grows, and things start to take on a more sinister and frightening turn."

VERSUS VADER

Available from November 27 is the hardcover collection of *Star Wars: Darth Vader and the Ninth Assassin* by writer Tim Siedell (see *Darth Vader and the Cry of Shadows* coverage this issue). This deluxe, 128-page edition of the five-issue series features art by Stephen Thompson and Ivan Fernandez, colors by Michael Atiyeh, and a cover by Ariel Olivetti. Strap in for the gripping tale of a hired killer willing to match his cool competence against the formidable dark side powers of Darth Vader, Lord of the Sith!





INCOMING

THE LATEST *STAR WARS* GEAR YOU'LL WANT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION! WORDS: JAMES BURNS

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Available: Now Price: From \$14.99 to \$19.99



FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

The second deluxe expansion for *Star Wars: The Card Game* has arrived from Fantasy Flight Games. Enlarging the Core Set's tense maneuvers and epic battles, *Balance of the Force* is a deluxe expansion with 154 all-new cards. *Balance of the Force* adds two multiplayer formats to the game as well as new objective sets for all six affiliations. By combining this new release with the core set of *Star Wars: The Card Game*, you can invite players to pair up for two-on-two competitions or up to three players can join forces against one of the expansion's two challenge decks, *Jerjerrod's Task* and *The Hunt for Skywalker*. The expansion also includes a powerful new objective set for each of the six affiliations, introducing Expanded Universe characters such as Mara Jade and Dash Rendar to the game. These objective sets promote rich teamwork when playing with an ally, but in head-to-head play, they will surely enhance existing strategies and decks. This is a fantastic addition to an already great game. Available: Now Price: \$29.95



WE LOVE FINE

We Love Fine continues to produce your favorite *Star Wars* designs on T-shirts, polos, and other apparel; indeed the options are about to grow as it adds men's tank-tops to the list. The first three men's tank-tops feature designs based Darth Vader, a stormtrooper, and Boba Fett, and come in sizes from small to XXL. Available: Now Price: \$23.00



Ladies aren't left out either, with the first ever long-sleeved crop top featuring a stormtrooper design—the first of many designs in this style! Available: Now Price: \$28.00



Kotobukiya continues to add to its line of 1:10 scale ARTFX+ statues with two new releases of pre-painted snap-fit kits that can be easily put together in seconds without glue or any modeling skill. All ARTFX+ statues come with magnets in their feet for display on their included bases.



SANDTROOPER SERGEANT ARTFX+ STATUE

The first new release is the Sandtrooper Sergeant, which stands 7" tall. This iconic leader from Episode IV was chosen by a fan poll at *Star Wars* Celebration VI. Availability: January 2014 Price: \$54.99



SANDTROOPER SQUAD LEADER TWO-PACK ARTFX+ STATUE

The sandtrooper two-pack gives the Sandtrooper Sergeant two troops to govern and is a great way to start your army building. First seen in *Star Wars: Episode IV* searching Tatooine for two lost droids, the sandtroopers use modified stormtrooper armor and unique weaponry.

The Sandtrooper ARTFX+ Statues replicate their onscreen counterparts perfectly, with intricately sculpted armor that shows off all of the markings from the film in excellent detail, and they stand 7" tall.

The two-pack comes with enough bonus parts to let you assemble and display the two sandtroopers in various iconic poses, either on the lookout with macrobinoculars pointing at targets or wielding the T-21 or RT-97C!

Availability: January 2014
Price: \$84.99

BOUNTY HUNTERS



MEET THE STARS, SHOW THE EVIDENCE, WIN THE BOUNTY! *STAR WARS INSIDER'S* BOUNTY HUNTERS SECTION IS SPONSORED BY KOTOBUKIYA. EACH ISSUE'S WINNER WILL RECEIVE THIS FANTASTIC KOTOBUKIYA *STAR WARS* STATUE KIT!

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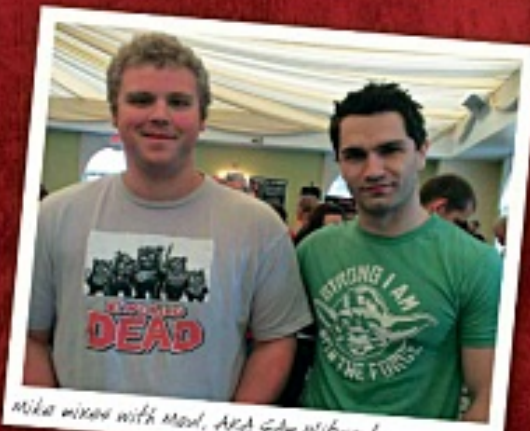


Richard and Sarah meet J.J. Abrams!

A MOMENT WITH J.J.!

"Is that...? Yes, it is! It is J.J. Abrams!" There he was, the director of *Star Wars: Episode VII* attending the John Williams concert at the Hollywood Bowl in August. My wife Sarah and I raced to catch up to him. We waited outside the snack shop until he loaded up on beverages for his family, then on his way out we asked for a photo. He couldn't have been friendlier and graciously stopped to pose for a pic. We didn't want to hold him up any longer so I thanked him for the picture, thanked him for bringing John Williams back for future films then thanked him for shooting on film instead of digital. "It's very important," he replied.

—Richard & Sarah Woloski Long Beach, CA



Mike mixes with Maul, AKA Sam Witwer!

MEETING MAUL

I ran into Sam Witwer, AKA the voice of Darth Maul at the Monster Mania Horror Convention in Cherry Hill, New Jersey last month. He noticed my shirt said "The Ewoking Dead" and we had a conversation about how the Ewoks, although cute, eat people. It ended with him theorizing that the little guys had R2-D2 tied up to use him as a kettle to cook with. —Mike Shaeffer, by email



Jorg meets the boss, Kathleen Kennedy!

BOUNTY WINNER!

A CATCH-UP WITH KATHLEEN!

I was attending *Star Wars Celebration Europe* in Essen, Germany. It was my first Celebration and an exciting weekend. On Saturday, after I bought some collectibles at the event, I went back to the hotel to store them in my room. Just when I came back from my room, I had the great fortune to meet Kathleen Kennedy in the hotel lobby. I took the chance to speak with her and asked a hotel employee to take a picture of us. She was very friendly and I also got her autograph. She made this day really a memorable one!

Best regards from Germany and May the Force be with you, always!
—Jorg Jesse, by email

MEETING THE STARS—AND THEIR PETS!

These are the first *Star Wars* celebrities I have ever met. The photos were taken at Celebration VI! I met *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*' Dave Filoni and Ashley Eckstein, and authors Ryder Windham and James Luceno. The dog is Carrie Fisher's pet, Gary Fisher. I'm holding him on a leash, because I worked for Official Pix on Saturday!—Ray Linkous, by email



Ray meets *Star Wars* Rebels producer Dave Filoni



Darth Plagueis author James Luceno



The incomparable Gary Fisher



Ryder Windham and Ashley Eckstein pose with Ray

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BANTHA TRACKS



BY THE FANS
FOR THE FANS

STAR WARS CELEBRATION EUROPE YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY PHOTOBOOK

If you have read *Bantha Tracks* for more than five minutes, you know that *Star Wars* Celebrations are my very favorite event to work on in my job at Lucasfilm. I started working on the Celebrations for *Attack of the Clones* (CII in 2002). Each has been exciting and memorable in different ways, but honestly, after we shut off the lights on Celebration III for *Revenge of the Sith* in 2005, I believed I would never produce another Celebration for a new *Star Wars* movie. I love being wrong.

Star Wars Celebration Europe, in Essen, Germany this past July commemorated decades of the incredible galaxy far, far away and thirty years of *Return of the Jedi*, and it also transmitted crackles of excitement for both the new television series, *Star Wars* *Rebels*, and a brand new theatrical *Star Wars* movie planned for 2015.

We're calling that movie Episode VII for now, and with the legendary Kathleen Kennedy at the production helm, and J.J. Abrams directing, it's an electric time to be creating events for *Star Wars*. At Celebration Europe we were able to look ahead to a new movie for the first time in eight years. New movie concept artists Iain McCaig and Doug Chiang attended the show and shared in the excitement, as well as *The Clone Wars*' Dave Filoni, now one of the producers on *Rebels*. Kennedy herself took in her first Celebration, and her praise for the fan contributions and for the spirit of the event was generous.

You loved the show too, by the looks of your pictures, emails, and tweets. We asked you for your favorite memories of Celebration Europe, and you sent some beauties. Thank you.



↑ Need Help with your PIN? Photo by Fred Vallat.

GET IN TRACKS!



← THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

Greig "Darth Elvis" Robertson poses with the Planet of the Apes TIE pilots. "I had to get my picture taken with them and it ended up as an impromptu sing-along for the crowds," he reports. "Thanks again for making this such an unforgettable weekend full of awesome memories."

THE TEEKAY REPORT

"Celebration Europe was a blast!" writes Tim "TeeKay-421" Veekhoven. "The TeeKay crew truly had a wonderful time in Essen. We hope we did our best to be good ambassadors for Star Wars fandom and Lucasfilm" (Editor's note: You were great ambassadors, Tim, thank you!).

← Veekhoven says that participating at the International Star Wars Panel on the Celebration Fan Stage with Gerald Home was a highlight of the show for him. "It was great to do a panel with Gerald, and with Ateş Çetin from Turkey, but also to announce the return of SWORA, the Star Wars Outer Rim Alliance," says Veekhoven. Pictured are Ricardo from HoloRed Estelar (Spain), Tim from TeeKay-421 (Belgium), Gerald Home (UK, performer from *Return of the Jedi*) and Ateş Çetin from Yıldız Savaşları (Turkey).

← Veekhoven masterminded and hosted the Star Wars Trivia Challenge at Celebration Europe. "It was a great honor and pleasure, certainly since Leland Chee (Keeper of the HoloCron at Lucasfilm) honored us by visiting our contest and wishing the participants the luck they needed to succeed in our challenge."

← RUNNING OF THE HOODS!

It's one of my life goals, to one day run with the Willow Hoods. If you don't know who Willow Hood is, check here: http://starwars.wikia.com/wiki/Willow_Hood. At each of the recent Celebrations, the Willow Hoods grab their ice cream maker look-alike props and run through the show, photobombing and delighting unsuspecting attendees. Creativity and humor like this are among my favorite aspects of Star Wars fandom.

Willow Hood membership officer Florian Wiedemann sent me this excellent Mission Report after Celebration Europe:

Mission-Report: Friday

- > 11 runners
- > Running-time was 38 minutes
- > No injuries, no missing runners
- > The film-team was missing after 9 minutes
- > Several missing moustaches





↑ MISSION ORANGE

Magnus Müller, the founder of Mission Orange, champions charity efforts at Celebration Europe and elsewhere while wearing his own Orange Charity Gunner costume.

Here, Müller presents Steve Sansweet of Rancho Obi-Wan his first orange gunner helmet as a gift for the super-collector's museum. "Steve is a good friend," writes Müller, "and I am very lucky that my project Mission Orange will have a personal and official place forever at Rancho Obi-Wan."

LOTS GOING ON

Sarah Saunders sent this shot, one of her favorite pictures from Celebration Europe. Saunders is wearing the TC-14 headpiece.



↑ You never know who you will run into at Star Wars Celebrations. Dennis Grundmann was at a collectors' swap meet in the Atlantic Congress Hotel next to the Messe Essen when *The Clone Wars* Supervising Director Dave Filoni came by. "I couldn't believe my eyes, but Dave Filoni passed by me, shook my hand and bought two vintage cardbacks from a friend of mine," writes Grundmann. "A lot of amazing stuff happened at Celebration Europe, but this moment I will never forget."



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Each submission must include the creator's name, age, contact details, date the work was created, and a statement that the work is original, and created by the person submitting it.

Send electronic files to banthatracks@starwars.com, or send your snail mail to *Bantha Tracks*, c/o Mary Franklin, P.O. Box 29901, San Francisco, CA 94129



↑ "This photo," says Matthias Zucker, "demonstrates what Han should've done to avoid all future discussions about who shot first and who didn't: create a distraction by crushing Greedo's legs with the table. But then again, Han was never that sneaky... Thanks for a great Celebration!"



↑ Emily Stevenson of the United Kingdom in a dress she created herself—with two new friends.



Photo by Emily Stephenson



↑ Oh My!
Photo by Robert Beard.

← FOREVER FETT!

"This Celebration was the best one yet," writes Matt Booker. "I was part of the Caravan of the Force team and had the pleasure of getting Jeremy [Bullock] in costume on the Sunday morning for the Fettes panel. Here's a pic of myself and three U.K. Garrison guys who are all Fett costumers, who helped before they went on stage."

Booker refers to the Fettes like this: John Morton – "Bespin Boba," Dickey Beer – "Stunt Boba," Tem Morrison – "Voice of Boba-n-Jango," and Jeremy Bullock – "Baby Boba." Pictured with the Fettes are Booker, Colin Davies, Stuart Burns, and Phil Riches.





Photo by Stefan Cembelista
of the Belgian Prop Builders.

← JEDI IN THE PARK

Thousands of fans attended the outdoor screening of *Return of the Jedi* on Friday night at Celebration. Says Joel Welch, "This photograph illustrates the sense of community among Star Wars fans enjoying their passion, friends and family alike, under a beautiful German sky."



↑ Jason Thorogood shares a joke with Princess Leia. Zak Portlock-Thorogood says he sent this shot to *Bantha Tracks* as a favorite memory of Celebration Europe because it shows the effort and dedication that fans will put into their passions, like costuming. "It also shows that two people who haven't even met before can become friends and have fun through just a couple of seconds taking a picture."



↑ "A big part of my Celebration Europe experience was covering the event for *The Star Wars Underworld*," says Dominic Jones. "Throughout the event, I live-tweeted several of the activities for fans who couldn't make it (from his Twitter feed @TheSWU). On Saturday, I saw Lucasfilm's Pablo Hidalgo on the convention floor and went to get a picture with him and thank him for all his work on *Star Wars*. Pablo recognized my *Star Wars Underworld* T-shirt and told me I was doing a great job live-tweeting the events! It was the highlight of my Celebration!"



↑ Leigh Hawker (right) and his fellow 501st member Paul Andrews as Tusken, trapped in the Bacta tank built by the Belgian prop builders.



Belgian prop builders in their Jabba set, with a bevy of lovely slave Leias and actor Anthony Daniels (C-3PO).



↑ "I have been to many Celebrations and have always felt like the odd one out because I didn't wear a Star Wars costume," writes Gary Mancini. "This year, I bit the laser blast and gave it a go. I decided to go as the 'Death Star escape' version of Han Solo, as I figured everyone else would go the traditional *A New Hope* look. I'm glad to say that I didn't see another version of my costume at Celebration Europe!"

Mancini says he was nervous wearing a costume at first, but soon relaxed after being asked to pose for photographs with many other costumers.

"I'm now confident enough to costume again at another Celebration," concludes Mancini. "We'll see you in Anaheim, Gary!"



↑ COMMUTING WITH INSIDER

After the *Return of the Jedi* outdoor screening on Friday night in the Grugapark, Dominic Jones piled into the Essen U-Bahn to return to his hotel.

"There seemed to be thousands of people packed in to train cars that were only meant to hold hundreds," writes Jones, "and I wound up pressed up against a couple of British fellows, one of whom turned out to be *Star Wars Insider* Editor Jonathan Wilkins! We struck up a conversation about all things Star Wars making the extremely cozy train ride actually enjoyable! I tracked down Jonathan later on in the convention to get this photo. Can't wait for Anaheim in 2015!"



↑ Gary Mancini had a chance encounter with actress Ashley Eckstein, whom he and his group met while traveling on the tube back to the hotels.

"Ashley is one of the loveliest Star Wars celebrities there is, and was happy to stop and pose for a photo," says Mancini. "As you can see, Ashley was wearing one of the Her Universe Darth Vader dresses from her company at the time."



↑ I HAVE A GOOD FEELING ABOUT THIS!

"Thought I'd share just one photo as it means so much to me," writes Simon Wilke of the UK. "After four years of work on my costume, here I am on stage as Threepio with Warwick (the Celebration Stage Host) thinking I'm some sort of God!" Photo by Michel Verpoorten.

THE BAD ROBOT CELEBRATION SLIDING DOOR

"I've been a Star Wars fan all my life, since watching *Return of the Jedi* on the big screen as a child in 1983," writes Paul McQue. "Then I started watching *Lost* in 2004 and became a fan of Bad Robot. When news broke that J.J. Abrams would be directing the next Star Wars movie, and that Bad Robot and Lucasfilm would be working together, two of my fandoms collided in a way that I never thought would happen."

McQue originally planned to take his *Return of the Jedi* stormtrooper armor to wear at Celebration Europe.

"But then I thought why not celebrate the future of Star Wars instead of the past?" he recalls. "I wanted to show my love and support to Bad Robot! Fast forward about six months and there I was standing in the hotel lobby on the Saturday looking like the QMX Bad Robot maquette that sits on my desk. I was ready."

"I wouldn't have been ready," continues McQue, "if it wasn't for the help of a new fellow Scottish friend who I met at the con, Grieg [Bdarth, Elvis]. He helped me put the costume on and was my guide through the convention. Thank you, buddy!"

"What really blew my mind was when I walked past Ben Burtt," continues McQue. "I knew he had worked on *Super 8* and *Star Trek* for Bad Robot, but for him to come up and ask for a picture, that was a real honor."

"And then," McQue continues, "it happened—my *Sliding Doors* moment. Literally, near the end of the day I walked through the sliding doors of the hotel and a guy came up to me and said, 'Excuse me, would you mind waiting two minutes? I know someone who'd like a picture with you.' By this point I was rushed for time to get to Carrie's talk;

I was hot and sore; I had finally made it back to the hotel ready to take the costume off, so I said, 'I'm just about to go to my room and take it off, I haven't got much time to wait around.' Then he said, 'I work for Lucasfilm, would you mind waiting please?'"

McQue and Grieg waited. "Just when I was beginning to think he was full of it, Kathleen Kennedy walked round the corner! I was stunned into silence," recalls McQue. "All I could manage was 'thank you' when she told me that the costume was awesome and that she was going to email pictures to J.J. Abrams."

"Kathleen was the reason I was wearing a Bad Robot costume," concludes McQue. "If it wasn't for her choosing J.J., I would have been wearing my stormtrooper armor. And what a lovely lady! She was smiling and laughing the whole time, even when I cheekily asked if I could stand on her other side so I could do another pose! As a kid who grew up in the 80s, this was a moment I'll never forget. It was an honor to meet Kathleen, even if I couldn't shake her hand and say 'thank you for everything, um, can I be an Episode VII extra please?'"



POSTSCRIPT FROM THE EDITOR: A FEW MORE FAVORITE CELEBRATION PICTURES



As a postscript to your favorite Celebration Europe photographs and memories, here are a few of the photographs I took, plus a few more sent to me that I could not help but include with my editorial commentary added.—Mary Franklin, Editor



Yes, I snapped this photograph of this autographed picture from Official Pix. Yes, there really are horns, a mustache, and glasses hand-drawn on this picture. Yes, there is a really good story behind it involving a certain protocol droid and a certain Ewok. No, I can't say any more than that.

Tem Morrison and Daniel Logan, front, clearly know how to do an intimidating Haka, as it should be! John Morton, Dickie Beer, and Jeremy Bulloch give it their best, but my favorite part of the picture is the expression on host Warwick Davis' face. He's fierce!

Thanks, Stefan Cembolista, for sending this picture from your Jabba's palace set at Celebration in Essen. Now, tell me what the Sith is going on here!



To one side of the Digital Stage there was a tiny, closet-sized room that we used for the green room. Small though it was, it had the very best views of the Celebration Experience Exhibit Hall. I took this photo from that green room on Saturday.



Why ask why? Simply enjoy that someone drew a stormtrooper on an ant eater. This brilliant spot of graffiti was on the side of the Grugahalle, which housed the Celebration Stage.



Photo by Michel Verpoorten, Mint In Box. Oliver Moore, who was Warwick Davis' stage producer for Celebration, sent me this as his favorite photo and memory from the event. I agree, Oliver. This brings back one of my favorite memories from Carrie Fisher's show too, when Warwick suggested they act out their scene in *Return of the Jedi*, in which Wicket first meets Leia. They were sitting on the couch as though it were the log in the Ewok woods. When it came time for the blaster shot, Warwick—and then Carrie right along with him—flipped over the back of the couch. When their heads came up together peeking out from behind, I had tears of laughter running down my face. Only at a Star Wars Celebration....

Celebration Europe is still vividly in my mind. It was a joyful festival with moments I want to remember always. One of my very favorite memories is not recorded in my photographs, but is very easy for me to recall. On Friday in the late afternoon I took Kathleen Kennedy on her first tour around a Star Wars Celebration. I admit I was nervous, because Celebrations are not like other conventions. I and most others—at least I hope most others—agree that what makes them different also makes them wonderful. The level of participation from fans, the fan-created props, sets, and costumes, the number of things there are to do and not just see—all these set Celebrations apart, but also make them look a little different than the normal pop culture convention. Kathleen seemed to sincerely appreciate the show, and especially the contributions and passion from the fans. She posed with the R2-D2s, sat at a table in Jabba's palace, and was interested in and asked questions about many things she saw.

I and my team are already working on Celebration 2015 in Anaheim, and I'm looking forward to more great memories, of my own, and from you.

Get in Tracks!
Mary Franklin
Editor, *Banthe Tracks*

THE SAGA CONTINUES INTO 2014....

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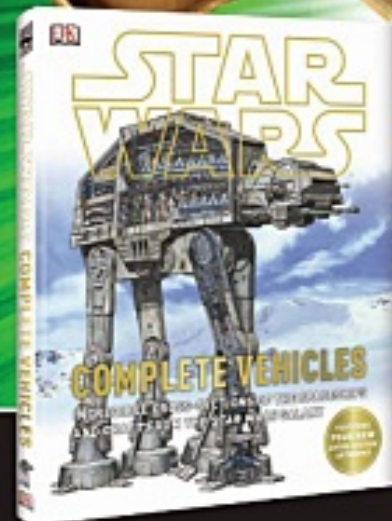
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